

Section 6: Frequently Asked Questions

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS PERTAINING TO THE NEW CFSR DATA INDICATORS

CATEGORY: RELATIONSHIP OF DATA INDICATORS WITH OTHER COMPONENTS OF THE CFSR PROCESS

Data indicators and the onsite case review process

Q. Will case records be reviewed for the composites during the onsite review?

A. Case records will not be reviewed for performance on the composite measures. The CFSR collects information about State performance from multiple sources including AFCARS and NCANDS (for the data indicators), case reviews, the Statewide Assessment prepared by the State, and interviews with multiple stakeholders. The goal of this approach is to ensure a comprehensive view of a State's child welfare system. The data indicators and the case review items are intended to measure different aspects of a particular performance area. Therefore each makes a unique contribution to understanding performance on the CFSR outcomes.

Q. You have adjusted the reunification measures in the data composites to include only children in foster care for 8 or more days. Will the selection of foster care cases for the onsite review also require that the child be in foster care for 8 or more days?

Foster care cases are eligible for selection for the onsite case review if the child was in foster care during the period under review and remained in foster care for at least 24 hours. We excluded very short-term stays in foster care from the data indicators to enhance the comparability of the data across States with regard to the timeliness of reunification and placement stability. However, because we are interested in reviewing the kinds of practices that result in children being placed in foster care for very short periods of time, we will not exclude children in foster care for less than 8 days in our selection of onsite review cases.

Data indicators and the Statewide Assessment and State Data Profile

Q: Since ACF used county-level data to generate the composites, will ACF provide county-level data to States in the State Data Profile?

A: The State data profile that is provided for the completion of the Statewide Assessment will have an attachment that presents the county-level composite scores for the data period under review. This will assist States in preparing their Statewide Assessment and in site selection for the onsite review. As part of ACF's ongoing technical assistance to States, the National Resource Center for Child Welfare Data and Technology (NRCCWDT) is available to assist States in calculating county-level performance on the composites at any point in time. The NRCCWDT has developed a CFSR Data Toolkit that includes the documentation and syntax for a State to track performance on any

given composite at the county and State level. This will be available on the Children’s Bureau and NRCCWDT websites.

Q: Will the county-level data be a factor in selecting sites for the onsite reviews?

A: Similar to round one, in round two of the CFSR, ACF and the States will jointly determine the two sites other than the State’s largest metropolitan subdivision in which onsite review activities will occur. In round one, we required States to consider information from the Statewide Assessment in identifying potential sites. In round two, both the county-level data available on the composite indicators and information in the Statewide Assessment will be considered in identifying potential sites for the onsite review.

Q: When will States receive their data profiles from ACF that contain the new composite measures?

A: Similar to round one of the CFSR, in round two, ACF will provide data profiles for States to use in their Statewide Assessments (SA) approximately a month before the “official” start time of the SA. Since the SA begins 6 months prior to the scheduled onsite review, this means we will provide the data profiles to the States approximately 7 months prior to the onsite review. We will do this in order to ensure that States have an opportunity to assess the accuracy of their data, make needed corrections and re-submissions, and be prepared to move forward with the SA in a timely manner. In addition, as part of ACF’s technical assistance, the NRCCWDT is available to assist States in the technical aspects of collecting and reporting the necessary AFCARS and NCANDS data, creating their own data profiles, and interpreting the data. The syntax to create the profile will be available on the CB and NRCCWDT websites.

CATEGORY: AFCARS AND NCANDS

Q: In the second round of the CFSR, will States be allowed to use sources of data other than AFCARS and NCANDS?

A: In the second CFSR round, States will be able to use a data source other than NCANDS to calculate their performance on the measures of maltreatment recurrence and maltreatment of children in foster care (safety-related measures). However, it is required in the regulation that, for the second round of the CFSR, only AFCARS data can be used to assess performance on measures related to permanency.

Q: In round one, States were allowed to re-submit AFCARS and NCANDS data to correct problems in the data. Will they be allowed to do that in round two?

A: ACF does not restrict resubmissions of data to either AFCARS or NCANDS. However, we may set time limitations with regard to using resubmissions to recalculate the data reported in the State's data profile. We expect States to address the accuracy of their data well in advance of receipt of the data profile so that any data quality issues can be addressed prior to the initial calculation of the data for the profile. The NRCCWDT can provide States with detailed technical assistance to ensure that the data reported to AFCARS and NCANDS meet the requirements of both data sets.

Although States received in-depth information and technical assistance regarding data quality issues relevant to AFCARS and NCANDS throughout the first round of the CFSR and the period of their program improvement plans (PIP), the new data indicators incorporate data elements that were not used in the first. If a State has not been diligent in improving the quality of reporting for all data elements, there may be data quality issues relevant to use of these new data elements. We will be notifying States regarding these issues and expect States to devote significant effort to improve the accuracy of their data before their round two CFSR process begins. If, however, continued problems arise with the data, we will permit timely re-submissions within reasonable time frames for purposes of re-running the data profile.

CATEGORY: QUESTIONS SPECIFIC TO UNDERSTANDING AND GENERATING COMPOSITES

Q. Why are there no composites for the safety outcomes?

A. We initially proposed composite measures for the two safety outcomes of recurrence and maltreatment of children in foster care. However, based on feedback from the field and concerns about consistency in interpreting some of the data, we eliminated all of the new measures that were proposed. We maintained the two measures that were used in the first round of the CFSR with some modifications (See section below on the Questions Pertaining to Safety Measures for more information on the modifications.)

Q. In round one, States had a difficult time explaining to the media their performance on the six data indicators relative to national standards, other States' performance, and national trends. How will States be able to explain its performance in view of the composites in round two?

A: The States can use the following information to assist them in discussing their performance on the national standards for the composites with the media and stakeholders.

- **The Federal government has developed composites to assess a State's performance with regard to achieving timeliness and permanency of reunification, timeliness of adoption, achieving permanency for children in foster care for long periods of time, and placement stability.**
- **A composite is a set of measures assessing a different aspect of performance with regard to a specific program area. A composite is designed to obtain a more comprehensive portrait of State performance in a specific outcome domain than a single measure can provide.**
- **Each measure in the composite makes a unique contribution to the total composite and so each is important for understanding how the State is performing, where it is doing well, and where improvement is needed.**
- **Composite scores have been scaled from 50 to 150. All scores are in the same direction, so that the higher the score, the better the performance.**
- **National standards are based on the distribution of State performance in 2004 on all data indicators (both the safety-related measures and the permanency-related composites). They are established to approximate the 75th percentile of the rank-ordered scores for all States.**
- **Although national standards have been established for each composite rather than for individual measures, the real focus of programmatic concern is performance on the measures. The goal is to improve State performance on all measures because each improvement reflects improvement in outcomes for children. Improvement on any given measure will result in an increase in the overall composite score.**
- **To better understand this, it may be useful to consider the example of national achievement tests that children often take in school (such as the Iowa Achievement Test). The typical achievement test provides an overall composite score and also information about performance in specific areas, such as science, math, verbal ability, etc. The composite score helps parents see how their children are doing overall. By looking at the breakdowns in specific areas, parents also are able to see where their children need to improve and where they are performing at an acceptable level. In a similar vein, the composite score for Timeliness and Permanency of Reunification, for example, shows States how they are doing overall. Information on the specific measures**

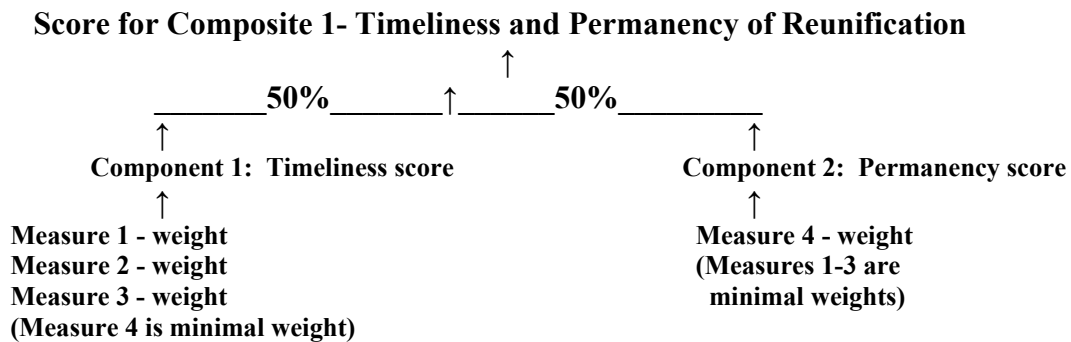
allows them to identify the areas within that composite where they need to improve and the areas where they are performing at an acceptable level.

Q. Will the States be able to generate their own composite scores and what tools will be available to help them do that?

A: **The Children’s Bureau is committed to assisting States in generating their own composite scores. The National Resource Center for Child Welfare Data and Technology, in collaboration with the Children’s Bureau, has developed a data-related CFSR Toolkit that includes the syntax for generating the county level performance scores and an Excel spreadsheet with the formulas embedded to calculate the composite scores. The tool kit also includes all of the NCANDS and AFCARS data elements that are relevant to the CFSR measures along with other information pertinent to the data. The toolkit is available on the NRCCWDT’s website at www.nrccwdt.org.**

Q. How do the composites work? Are some measures weighted more than other measures within each composite?

A. A sample diagram for a composite is provided below.



The principal components analysis resulted in the identification of two principal components for composite 1 (timeliness and permanency of reunification), three principal components for composite 2 (timeliness of adoption), two principal components for composite 3 (achieving permanency for children in foster care for long periods of time), and one principal components for composite 4 (placement stability). (See Section # for a description of the components and measures in each composite). Each measure within a component has a specific “weight” (also called coefficient) that depicts the strength of the measure’s contribution to the component. These weights were established through the principal components analyses and each weight is unique. In contrast to the measures, each component score has an equal “weight” in determining the composite score. If there are two components (as there are for composite 1 and 3), the score for each contributes 50 percent to the composite score. If there are three components (as there are for composite 2), each contributes 33.3 percent to the composite score. If there is only one component (as for composite 3), the weight of the individual measures determines the composite score.

Q. Do all counties contribute equally to the State composite score?

A. No. Each county has a specific contribution (weight) to the State composite score based on the number of children served in foster care in the county during the year.

Q. What is the mathematical formula for computing the composite score?

A. Composite scores are calculated from county performance. There are several simple arithmetic formulas required in calculating the State composite score from the county performance on any given measure. ACF will provide the States with an Excel Spreadsheet that has all of the formulas embedded so that the State can calculate both county level and State level composite scores. The NRCCWDT will provide States with assistance in using the syntax and spreadsheet to calculate composite scores.

Q. Why do the composite scores range from 50 to 150?

A. The actual composite scores are in the form of a standardized score, or z-score. Typically, a z-score looks something like +1.23, or -0.81, or +0.02. We determined that this type of score would be difficult to discuss and interpret. Consequently, we decided to transform the scores into scaled scores. However, this transformation typically results in a scale from 0 to 100. This meant that one State would by necessity receive a score of 0 and one State a score of 100. We determined that assigning a State a score of 0 or even assigning a State a score of 100 could lead to a misinterpretation on the part of stakeholders as well as the general public. For example, a score of 0 might be perceived as the State not achieving any positive outcomes for children in the particular performance area, or a score of 100 might be perceived as the State achieving positive outcomes for all of the children in a particular performance area. Since neither of these interpretations would be valid, we transformed the scale once more (simply by adding 50 to each score) so that the range is between 50 and 150. This is a commonly used procedure used in many types of standardized tests.

Q. For some of the measures in the composite, a higher score means a higher performance. For other measures, a higher score actually means a lower level of performance. However, all of the composite scores are in the same direction. That is, a higher composite score means a higher level of performance. How does this work?

A. There are four measures for which a higher score means a lower level of performance. These are: (1) the median length of stay in foster care (in months) to reunification; (2) the median length of stay in foster care (in months) to adoption; (3) the percentage of children exiting foster care who re-enter in less than 12 months from the time of exit; and (4) the percentage of children emancipated from foster care or reaching their 18th birthday while in foster care who were in foster care for 3 years or longer. In the principal components analyses and in the calculation of the composite score, the direction of these measures was reversed (i.e., the z-score was multiplied by -1) so that for the final composite score a higher score means a higher level of performance. However, when States are reviewing their performance on the individual measures, they should be aware that for these measures, lower percentages or lower number of months in foster care are associated with higher performance.

CATEGORY: SPECIFIC QUESTIONS REGARDING SAFETY MEASURES

Q. Why did you change the wording of the measures for Recurrence of Maltreatment and Maltreatment in Foster Care so that the direction of performance is now reversed?

A. We changed the wording on these measures to reverse the direction of performance so that higher percentages corresponded to higher performance. We made this change for two reasons: (1) we received many requests from the field to focus on the positive rather than the negative aspects of performance; and (2) we received many recommendations from the field to have all standards go in the same direction. That is, the higher the score, the better the performance on either the safety measures or the composite scores.

Q. Why did you change the denominator in the measure of maltreatment in foster care from a 9-month time period to a 12-month time period.

A. For the first round of the CFSR, we used a 9-month period for the denominator (i.e., the number of children served in foster care) for the measure of maltreatment of children in foster care. It was necessary to use this time frame because at that time NCANDS data were being submitted on a calendar year basis and AFCARS data were reported on a fiscal year basis. Therefore, there was overlap of the two data systems only for the 9 month period beginning January 1st and ending September 30. NCANDS data are now submitted on a Federal fiscal year basis, so the two data sets are consistent and the 9-month time frame is no longer necessary.

Q. Since the safety measures were not changed, other than reversing the direction, why were new standards calculated?

A. The CFSR is designed to promote continuous quality improvement in child welfare outcomes over time. Because the focus of the CFSR is on current practice in child welfare, ACF decided to use the flexibility provide in regulation (45 CFR 1355.34(b)(4) to update the initial standards (established in 1999) to reflect more recent performance.

Q. The percentages of children who do not experience maltreatment in foster care are very high (over 99 percent) for all States, indicating that only a small percentage of children in foster care are reported to NCANDS as victims of child maltreatment by a foster parent (including relative foster parent) or facility staff member. Why is this measure meaningful?

A. The inclusion of the measure of maltreatment in foster care informs Safety Outcome 1 – Children are first and foremost protected from abuse and neglect. Safety outcome 1 is based on several statutory requirements for States to ensure that children are in safe placements in foster care and are provided with quality services to protect their safety and health (for example, see section 471(a)(20) and (22) and section 475(5) of the Social Security Act). Although performance on this measure suggests that the percentage of children in foster care who are victims of child maltreatment by a foster parent or facility staff member is very small, each fraction of a percent represents a child who was a victim of abuse or neglect while in a State’s foster care system.

CATEGORY: SPECIFIC QUESTIONS REGARDING PERMANENCY MEASURES

Q: Why is ACF not using more foster care entry cohort measures in the CFSR?

A: Longitudinal measures that follow a cohort of children over time can capture current practice in a State as it relates to a particular performance area and thus are particularly useful for the CFSR. For this reason, a longitudinal measure following a cohort of children entering foster care was developed as part of the composite assessing timeliness and permanency of reunification. However, data analyses conducted by the Children's Bureau found that a similar measure for the composite assessing timeliness of adoptions was not feasible for the CFSR. Because it is necessary to follow an entry cohort for at least 3 years before the number of adoptions become meaningful for analyses and before the denominator stabilizes, an entry cohort measure would have to focus on children who entered foster care at least 3 years prior to the CFSR period under review. Such an approach would not be useful in capturing current practice and would not be consistent with the regulatory requirement that the CFSR encompass timeframes that do not overlap with the prior CFSR review, the fiscal year used for the national standards, and the PIP implementation period.

However, because of the benefits of longitudinal measures for assessing current practice with regard to timeliness of adoptions, ACF developed longitudinal measures that follow a cohort of children who were in foster care for 17 months or longer on the first day of the fiscal year to determine the percent who are adopted before the end of the fiscal year and the percent who become legally free within 6 months from the start of the fiscal year. To capture current practice with regard to achieving permanency for children in foster care for long periods of time, we developed a longitudinal measure that follows a cohort of children who were in foster care for 24 months or longer at the start of the fiscal year.

Q. Children who are in foster care for less than 8 days are now excluded from the measures assessing timeliness of reunification and placement stability for children in foster care for less than 12 months. Why did you make this exclusion? How does it impact the requirement that States are required to report children to AFCARS if they are in foster care for 24 hours or longer?

A. There is no change in the requirement that States report all children to AFCARS who are in State foster care for 24 hours or longer. The new measures assessing timeliness of reunification will include only children who were in foster care for 8 days or longer in order to address variation in State practices and policies concerning the placement of children in foster care for very short periods of time. In some States, this is a frequent practice, while in other States, it is a fairly rare occurrence, depending upon such factors as the availability of placement prevention services or State policies regarding removal and placement of children in foster care during an investigation. Because for the most part, the kinds of practices and agency efforts necessary to achieve timely reunification or placement stability for a child who has been removed from home and placed in foster care are not usually applicable for these very short-term placements, we determined that the focus on children who have been in foster care for 8 days or longer would both better capture performance with regard to reunification and placement practices and increase the comparability of performance across States on measures of timeliness of reunification and placement stability.

Initially, ACF also proposed a measure that required that a child be in foster care for 30 days or longer in order to be included in the analysis. This measure was eliminated from the composite after the principal components analysis revealed a very high correlation between the 30-day and 8-day adjustment measures, suggesting that the measures capture the same information. In addition, there was more support among respondents to the Federal Register notice for the 8-day measure than there was for the 30-day measure. To assist States in understanding how this adjustment impacts their performance, we will provide data in the State Data Profile regarding the percentage of children entering foster care in a fiscal year who are discharged from foster care in less than 8 days after the date of removal from the home.

Questions specific to composite 1: Timeliness and permanency of reunification.

Q. (Re. Composite 1) Why is ACF incorporating AFCARS information pertaining to use of trial home visit as a placement option in the measures assessing timeliness of reunification?

A. ACF initially proposed the trial home visit adjustment to the measures of timeliness of reunification in order to address variations in State policy regarding returning children to their families (parents, relatives, or other caretakers) for a period of time before a discharge from foster care. This practice often is referred to as “physical reunification” to distinguish it from a reunification in which legal custody is returned or transferred to the parents or relatives. For the most part, the purpose of this practice is to monitor and assist families. This practice may be required in State statute, written into agency policy, or reflect standard case practice in a State.

Many respondents to the initial Federal Register notice recommended that for purposes of the CFSR, ACF should consider “physical reunification” as equivalent to a discharge from foster care to reunification. We are unable to do this because a discharge from foster care means that the agency no longer has a court order for care and placement responsibility. Therefore, a child is considered “reunified” when the agency no longer has legal responsibility for the child’s care and placement. Therefore, a child placed in his/or her home prior to a discharge of the court order is considered physically reunified but not legally reunified.

We believe that the trial home visit adjustment we have made to the measures of timeliness of reunification captures information about the time in foster care of most children who were physically reunified prior to an actual discharge from foster care. States that return children to their families prior to discharge are required to report them to AFCARS as having a living arrangement of “trial home visit,” even if the placement is not considered a “trial.” Through a review of the data, we determined that a trial home visit placement of longer than 30 days that resulted in an eventual discharge to reunification captures the vast majority of instances that may be considered “physical reunification.” Therefore, we incorporated into the measure the time span from the date of entry into foster care to a placement in a trial home visit (as reported in AFCARS) that was longer than 30 days and that was the final placement before the child was discharged from foster care with a discharge reason of return to family or live with relatives. It is important that States ensure that the date reported for AFCARS element #23 (date of current placement) is the date the trial home visit placement began.

Q. (Re. Composite 1) Why does composite 1 have both an entry-cohort measure of timeliness of reunification and measures focusing on children discharged from foster care to reunification.

A. Several respondents to the Federal Register notice suggested that the measure of reunification that follows an entry cohort of children is sufficient to capture State performance with regard to timeliness of reunification. They expressed the opinion that other measures of timeliness are not necessary, and in fact, are not valid in assessing timeliness. However, the purpose of the CFSR is to examine outcomes for all children who receive services funded through the Federal government's programs, not just those who entered foster care in a given year, i.e., the entry cohort. An entry cohort does not achieve that goal. We are using other measures, such as the median time children spend in foster care prior to reunification and the percentage of reunifications occurring in less than 12 months of a child's entry into foster care, to ensure that we examine outcomes from the perspective of both children newly entering foster care and those exiting who have been in foster care for varying lengths of time.

Q. (Re. Composite 1) Why is the measure of foster care re-entry incorporated into the composite assessing reunification rather than being separate as it was in the first round of the CFSR?

A. A consistent finding of our analyses of State data on reunifications within 12 months and re-entries within 12 months (as well as the research findings reported in the literature) is that many (although not all) States with a high percentage of reunifications in less than 12 months also tend to have a high percentage of re-entries into foster care in less than 12 months. We believe that a reunification that results in a re-entry within a 12 month period should not be considered an effective reunification. Therefore, we expect States not only to reunify children in a timely manner, but also to do so in a way that supports the permanency of the reunification. Consequently, we incorporated re-entry into the composite to ensure that this variable is accounted for in assessing the timeliness of reunification. Combining these measures in the composite provides both ACF and the States with a more accurate portrayal of a State's performance with regard to reunifying children in a timely manner.

Q. (Re. Composite 1) For the entry cohort measure, why is your entry cohort a 6-month cohort, that is, it considers only those children entering foster care for the first time over a 6-month AFCARS reporting period?

A. A 6-month reporting period was used because of the rolling annual files that are used during the PIP periods. The advantage of using first time entry cohorts is that they are independent of one another i.e. different children appear in each cohort. If you use more than one AFCARS reporting period when constructing rolling annual files, approximately one-half of each cohort will include children from the previous cohort. Therefore, they would not be independent and we believe it is important to maintain the integrity of the established cohort.

Questions specific to composite 2: Timeliness of adoptions

Q. (Re. Composite 2) There are two measures that follow children who have been in foster care for 17 months or longer on the first day of the fiscal year. Why did you select children in care for 17 months or longer as the cohort for these measures?

A. Federal law requires State child welfare agencies to file a petition to terminate parental rights and pursue adoption for a child who has been in foster care for 15 of the most recent 22 months, unless an exception applies (sec 475(5)(E) and (F) of the Social Security Act). A 17-month time frame was chosen for the measures because, in accordance with the law, a child is considered to have “entered foster care” (for purposes of starting the clock for the 15 of 22 months) on the earlier of: (1) the first judicial finding that the child has been subjected to abuse and neglect, or the date that is 60 days after the date on which the child is removed from the home. Because AFCARS does not collect information pertaining to the date of the first judicial finding, we are using the 60 days after the child is removed from the home as the “start date” for the termination of parental rights requirement which lengthens the period from 15 months to 17 months.

Questions specific to composite 3- Achieving Permanency for Children in Foster Care for long periods of time)

Q. (re Composite 3) In the measures for this composite you have defined permanency in terms of adoption, reunification, and guardianship. Why have you done that?

A. ACF considers the outcomes of adoption, reunification (including living with relative), and guardianship, as the only outcomes reported in AFCARS that indicate that the child has attained a permanent home. We are able to look individually at the permanency option of adoption and reunification, but we are not able to do that with guardianship because the extent of the use of guardianship as a permanency option varies among the States. The measures in Composite 3 allow us to incorporate children who achieve permanency through guardianship, as well as those who achieve permanency through reunification and adoption.

Q. (Re. Composite 3) In some of the measures for this composite, you add the term "prior to their 18th birthday." How will that affect States who allow children to remain in foster care past their 18th birthday?

A. The composites do not account for children who are 18 and older because Federal law does not compel ACF to hold States accountable for a population they serve at their option (in most cases). ACF supports State efforts to continue to serve children in foster care past the age of majority.

Q. (re Composite 3). Why have you included the following measure: Of all children who were emancipated from foster care or reached their 18th birthday while in foster care, what percent had been in foster care for 3 years or longer?

A. This measure reflects the expectation that child welfare agencies will make concerted efforts to achieve permanency for all children in foster care. We acknowledge that some children will be in foster care when they reach the age of majority, particularly children who enter foster care as mid

or late adolescents. The measure assesses State performance with regard to ensuring that children who reach the age of majority while in foster care or who exit foster care due to emancipation, do not spend their formative years in foster care.

Questions specific to composite 4 – Placement Stability

Q. (Composite 4: Placement stability). In the first round of the CFSR, the measure of placement stability focused only on children in foster care for less than 12 months. Why has ACF added two new measures of placement stability focusing on children who were in foster care for at least 12 months but less than 24 months, and for 24 months or longer?

A. The two new measures were added to assess State performance in ensuring placement stability for children who have been in foster care for longer than 12 months. This reflects ACF's concern that children in foster care experience placement stability regardless of the length of time they are in foster care.

Q. (Composite 4: Placement stability). Why does ACF consider 2 placements or fewer as representing placement stability.

A. ACF promotes placing children in the most appropriate and stable placements initially in order to avoid any unnecessary moves. We also recognize that an initial placement for a child may not always meet the child's needs and that a child might have to be moved to a more appropriate setting after entering foster care. Further, we recognize that some children's needs initially require more restrictive placements to meet their needs, and that once these needs are met, the children may be appropriately moved to less restrictive setting. A measure that includes no more than two placements within a 12-month period permits practice within this framework.

Q. Why doesn't ACF exclude children from the measures who entered foster care for reasons other than child maltreatment – i.e., through the juvenile justice or mental health systems or because of their behavior?

A. The reason why a child enters foster care is not part of the Federal definition of a child in foster care.

MISCELLANEOUS

Q: Will ACF report on the composite measures in the Annual Report to Congress in the same way that it did with the original six CFSR data measures?

A: We plan to begin reporting data on the measures used in the composites and the composites themselves in the next Report to Congress. They will not be included in the Report to Congress 2003.

Q. Why are there no well-being measures?

A. Neither NCANDS nor AFCARS collects information pertaining to child well being concerns. Therefore, there are no data measures that capture this information. However, the case review process will continue to assess State performance on outcomes relevant to the well being of children and families.

Q. Is compliance with the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) being tracked as a measure in the CFSR?

A. The Children's Bureau does not have the authority to monitor State compliance with ICWA. Therefore we do not have data measures that relate to compliance with the provisions of ICWA. However, through our onsite case review of State performance with regard to maintaining connections for children in foster care with their families and communities, we consider whether States notify Tribes of the Native American children in the State's placement and care responsibility and whether States follow the placement preferences for Native American children.

Q. Will the case review instrument change? If so, when will it be released for review. Also, when will the Statewide Assessment instrument be available for review.

A. Some changes have been made to the case review instrument and the Statewide Assessment. They will be finalized prior to the onsite reviews and posted on the Children's Bureau website.