

Foster and Adoptive Parent Licencing, Recruitment and Retention: Systemic Factor Data Planning Worksheet



CFSR Round 4 Planning and Implementation Tool

Introduction and Overview

As part of the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR), states assess the extent to which seven systemic factors function effectively to promote the safety, permanency, and well-being of children and families receiving child welfare services. These seven systemic factors include:

- Statewide information system
- Case review system
- Quality assurance system
- Staff and provider training
- Service array and resource development
- Agency responsiveness to the community
- **Foster and adoptive parent licensing, recruitment, and retention**

The CFSR Statewide Assessment process involves a review of data and evidence to strengthen understanding of child welfare system performance on 18 items associated with the seven systemic factors.¹

This Data Planning Worksheet helps state teams consider existing information and data sources and additional data needs for assessing the statewide functioning of one systemic factor—**foster and adoptive parent licensing, recruitment, and retention**. This systemic factor explores the consistent application of state standards, compliance with criminal background checks, diligent recruitment of foster and adoptive families that reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children and young people who need homes, and the use of cross-jurisdictional resources for permanent placements.

The worksheet tables are intended to support state teams in early phases of preparing for the CFSR Statewide Assessment by taking stock of available information and data sources, considering limitations and gaps, and identifying additional data to generate or develop further before analysis begins. This tool draws from, and should be used together with, the more comprehensive information provided in [Assessing Systemic Factor Functioning Using Data and Evidence](#).² Both resources highlight potential sources of relevant information and data that child welfare agencies and their partners can use to explore and demonstrate functioning of their system for foster and adoptive parent licensing, recruitment, and retention. Note, however, that the inclusion of data and information from the identified sources by itself does not mean that a state has demonstrated conformity with the factor.

¹ For more information on the importance of collecting and using quality data and information to assess and routinely monitor statewide functioning of systemic factors and findings from CFSR Round 3, see [Systemic Factors—Results From the CFSRs: 2015–2018](#).

² Find more detailed information on each systemic factor and related items, questions to explore the systemic factor federal requirements and beyond, and sources of data for demonstrating functionality in [Assessing Systemic Factor Functioning Using Data and Evidence](#) on the CFSR Information Portal.

Use this tool to:

- Identify existing and needed data sources to demonstrate evidence of the functioning of foster and adoptive parent licensing, recruitment, and retention
- Prepare for the CFSR Round 4 Statewide Assessment

Organization

[Tips and Things to Remember](#)

[Worksheet Instructions](#)

[Planning Worksheet Tables for Existing Data Sources by Item \(A\)](#)

- [Item 33: Standards Applied Equally](#)
- [Item 34: Requirements for Criminal Background Checks](#)
- [Item 35: Diligent Recruitment of Foster and Adoptive Homes](#)
- [Item 36: State Use of Jurisdictional Resources for Placement](#)

[Planning Worksheet Table for New Data Sources or Data Quality Improvements \(B\)](#)

[Appendix: Data Analysis Checklist](#)

See also [Data Planning Worksheets for other CFSR systemic factors](#)

Tips and Things to Remember

- ◆ The Children’s Bureau (CB) considers a systemic factor to be “functioning” if it is operating consistently and on an ongoing basis across the state for all relevant populations. Description of a law, procedure, or process alone is not sufficient to demonstrate the level of functioning.
- ◆ As part of efforts to advance equity for all children and families, states should consider how their data, policies, and practices may reflect or contribute to inequities in services or outcomes for specific populations.³
- ◆ While identifying and developing data sources and plans for assessing systemic factor functioning, state teams should engage various perspectives, including young people and families with lived experience, tribes, legal and judicial communities, and other child welfare system partners.
- ◆ While CB does not require a specific format for presenting data on systemic factors, to adequately demonstrate functioning, states must:
 - ◆ Present relevant and quality evidence
 - ◆ Use sound measurement principles
 - ◆ Rely on recent data (within the last 3 years)
- ◆ States can use the “Data Analysis Checklist” in the worksheet’s appendix as a support in assessing the quality and relevance of evidence proposed for analysis.
- ◆ To show how well each systemic factor functions statewide, states should present quantifiable data as evidence where appropriate (e.g., number of children documented in an administrative report). Frequently, these data can be expressed in the form of a fraction showing what part of an identified population (the denominator) meets a specified condition (the numerator). In some cases, qualitative data (e.g., findings from interviews or focus groups) may be needed to provide context or to better understand systemic factor functioning.
- ◆ **The exhibit presented for each item on the worksheet pages below highlights a series of questions or key aspects and data sources that exemplify one way to demonstrate how well a systemic factor is functioning. While intended to support state thinking about available data, note that this is not the only way to demonstrate functioning.**
- ◆ State teams may need multiple types of data and information to demonstrate functioning. Yet while seeking to be comprehensive, state teams should also consider how relevant each potential source is to answer the specific questions posed in the Statewide Assessment. States may have additional data or information that can help explore other questions outside the scope of the federal requirements. Some of these data and information may be useful to other parts of the CFSR (e.g., root cause analysis of a problem area, Program Improvement Plan [PIP] development for improvement of a systemic factor) or ongoing CQI but may not be needed to demonstrate systemic factor functioning in the Statewide Assessment.

Sources and Types of Data

To assess performance on systemic factors, states use both quantitative and qualitative evidence, including:

- ◆ State administrative data from statewide information systems
- ◆ Management information reports
- ◆ Administrative data from courts, service providers, and other partners
- ◆ Information included in the Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP), Annual Progress and Services Report (APSR), Court Improvement Program (CIP) Strategic Plan, and other reports
- ◆ Case record reviews
- ◆ Surveys, interviews, or focus groups with case participants, agency staff, and system partners
- ◆ Quality assurance (QA) and continuous quality improvement (CQI) data
- ◆ Federal and state reviews and audits
- ◆ Program evaluations

³ See also [Advancing Equity and Inclusion Through the CFSRs](#) and consider the “Getting Curious” questions and considerations presented in [Assessing Systemic Factor Functioning Using Data and Evidence](#).

Worksheet Instructions

A. Complete the Planning Worksheet Tables for Existing Data Sources

For each item:

1. Review the **question to answer** in the CFSR Statewide Assessment.
2. Look at the **overview exhibit** for a summary of the Assessment question's subcomponents and their interrelationships. For each component, consider "How do you know?"
3. Review the **subquestions** for exploring systemic factor federal requirements. (While the subquestions align with the exhibit, they may include additional questions for consideration or context.) In the **source table(s)**, place a check by available information and data sources that your state can use to address each question. Multiple sources may be needed to fully respond to each question and confirm reliability of the data or information.
4. For each existing source:
 - ◆ Enter a **title or brief description** (e.g., policy title or report name)
 - ◆ Identify the applicable **time period** of the information or data in the source that will address the subquestion (e.g., children exiting care in fiscal year 2021)⁴ (note the time period may differ from the date the data or information were collected or recorded)
 - ◆ Describe the **scope** of the data, noting the specific population and/or geographic area as applicable (e.g., children in care for at least 60 days in region 1)
 - ◆ Identify any known data **limitations**. Consider—Are the data recent? complete? accurate? reliable?
5. In the item review:
 - ◆ Indicate whether the state has **sufficient data** to fully respond to the Statewide Assessment question
 - ◆ Identify **additional information or data** that may be needed to demonstrate systemic factor functioning
 - ◆ Document **data quality issues** that need to be addressed
 - ◆ Consider whether some available **data and information fall outside the scope** of the Statewide Assessment question and therefore should not be presented to demonstrate systemic factor functioning

When the following conditions exist, move to the [Planning Worksheet Table for New Data Sources or Data Quality Improvements \(Section B\)](#):

- ◆ Available data sources are not sufficient to answer all components of the Statewide Assessment questions
- ◆ Additional information or data needs to be collected/generated
- ◆ Data limitations or data quality issues need to be addressed

(Consider * prompts in Section A tables as a reminder to visit Section B)

B. Complete the Planning Worksheet Table for New Data Sources or Data Quality Improvements

1. List the relevant systemic factor, item, and subquestion where information or data is needed.
2. Describe the proposed information or data source, time period, scope, method of collection or development, expected completion date, lead person responsible, and other related notes.

⁴ If the state's fiscal year (e.g., January 1–December 31) differs from the federal fiscal year (October 1–September 30), specify the related dates in the time period column of the source tables.

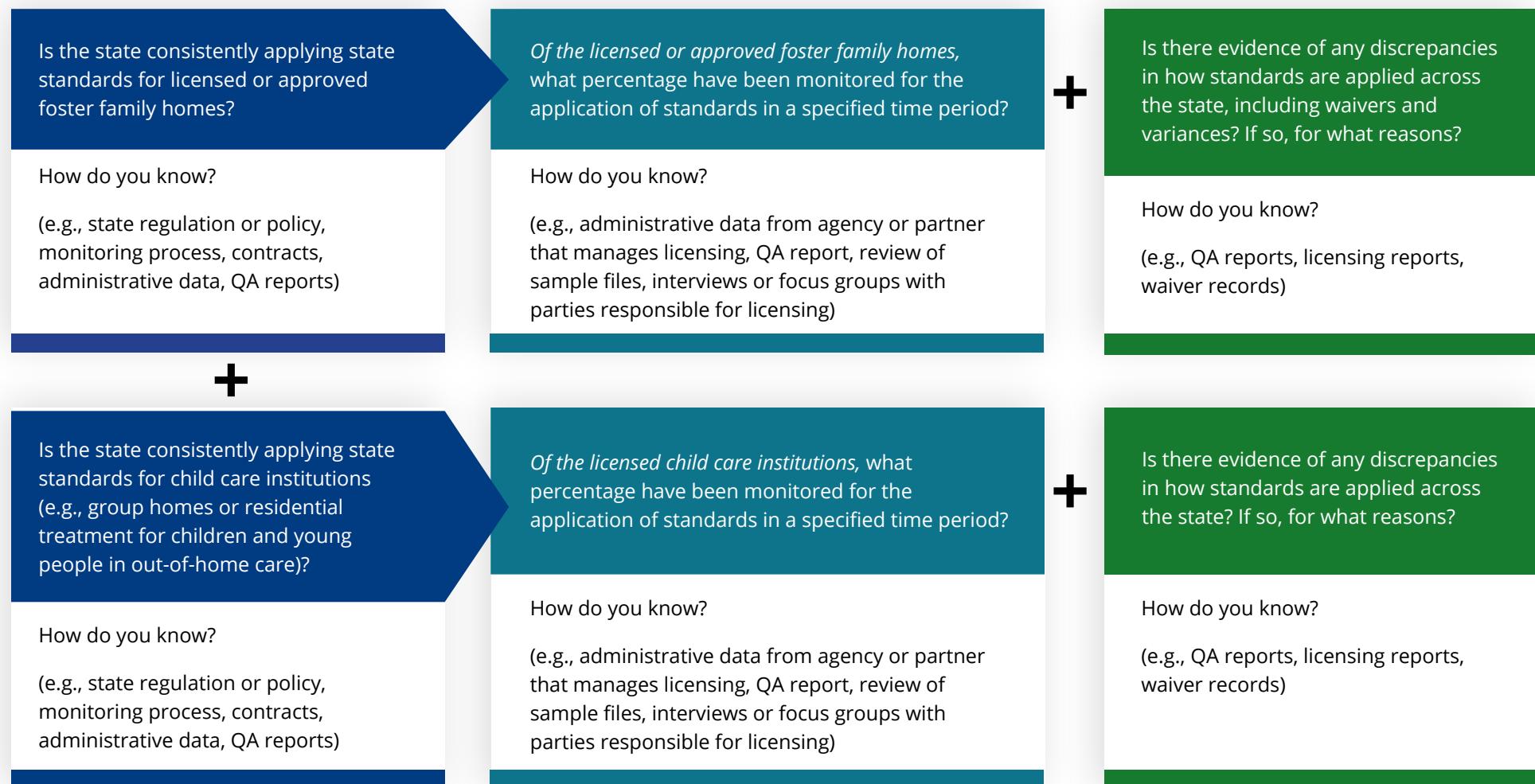
A. Planning Worksheet Tables for Existing Data Sources

In the Statewide Assessment, states provide evidence on four items related to the functioning of foster and adoptive parent licensing, recruitment, and retention: standards applied equally (item 33); requirements for criminal background checks (item 34); diligent recruitment of foster and adoptive homes (item 35); and state use of jurisdictional resources for placement (item 36). The overview exhibits present key aspects of the Statewide Assessment question, and the source tables can help teams identify and organize their data to respond to the overarching question and related subquestions. While intended to prompt critical thinking about how to demonstrate functioning, the approach represented is not the only possible approach.

Item 33. Standards Applied Equally

Statewide Assessment question: How well is the foster and adoptive parent licensing, recruitment, and retention system functioning statewide to ensure that state standards are applied to all licensed or approved foster family homes or child care institutions receiving title IV-B or IV-E funds?

Item 33 Overview Exhibit



Item 33 Source Tables

Subquestion 33A. What are the state's standards that are applied to all licensed or approved foster family homes or child care institutions (e.g., group homes, congregate care settings) receiving title IV-B or IV-E funds? How does the state ensure consistent application of state standards?

(Note: While the state's standards and policies are relevant context, CB does not look for detailed descriptions of state standards and policies in response to this item's Statewide Assessment question. States should focus here on how they have ensured *consistency* in the application of their standards.)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Possible Data Sources	Title/Description	Time Period	Scope of Data	Data Limitations
	State regulation or policy for each caregiver category (e.g., foster parents, licensed kinship parents, pre-adoptive parents, therapeutic foster parents, congregate care settings)				
	Other				
	None*				

Subquestion 33B. What is the state's process for granting and tracking waivers and variances? What are the reasons for granting waivers and variances (e.g., for relative caregivers or to allow large sibling groups to be placed together), and are they specific to the child or to the home? How many waivers were granted in the past 3 years and for what reasons? Are waivers and variances applied consistently?

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Possible Data Sources	Title/Description	Time Period	Scope of Data	Data Limitations
	Description of waiver and variance process and how waivers and variances are tracked				
	Description of what standards may be waived				
	QA report				
	Administrative data				
	Contracts				
	Licensing reports				
	Other				
	None*				

Subquestion 33C. How do the state's standards vary by caregiver type (e.g., foster parent vs. adoptive parent vs. licensed kinship provider) or institution type (e.g., group home vs. other types of child care institutions, including private child placement agencies)?

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Possible Data Sources	Title/Description	Time Period	Scope of Data	Data Limitations
	Description of state standards for each caregiver category				
	Other				
	None*				

Subquestion 33D. How does the state monitor licensing of foster and adoptive homes and child care institutions?

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Possible Data Sources	Title/Description	Time Period	Scope of Data	Data Limitations
	Description of who monitors the standards and how often				
	Administrative data				
	Contracts				
	Other				
	None*				

Subquestion 33E. What is the state's QA process to monitor the consistent application of the standards? What do QA processes and reports reveal about discrepancies in equally applying the standards, including waivers and variances?

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Possible Data Sources	Title/Description	Time Period	Scope of Data	Data Limitations
	Description of QA process				
	Administrative data from state				
	Administrative data from agency partner that manages licensing, recruitment, and retention				
	QA report (e.g., results from a review of a sample of licensing files)				
	Interviews or focus groups with parties responsible for licensing				

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Possible Data Sources	Title/Description	Time Period	Scope of Data	Data Limitations
	QA/CQI				
	CFSP				
	Other				
	None*				

Item 33 Review.

Are the available data sources sufficient to answer all components of the Statewide Assessment question using an appropriate measurement approach?	YES	NO*	
If not, what additional data or information needs to be collected or generated?*			
Are there data limitations or data quality concerns that need to be addressed to support quality evidence?	YES*	NO	
Do any of the data sources listed fall outside the scope of the Statewide Assessment question (e.g., address other questions or root causes)?	YES	NO	

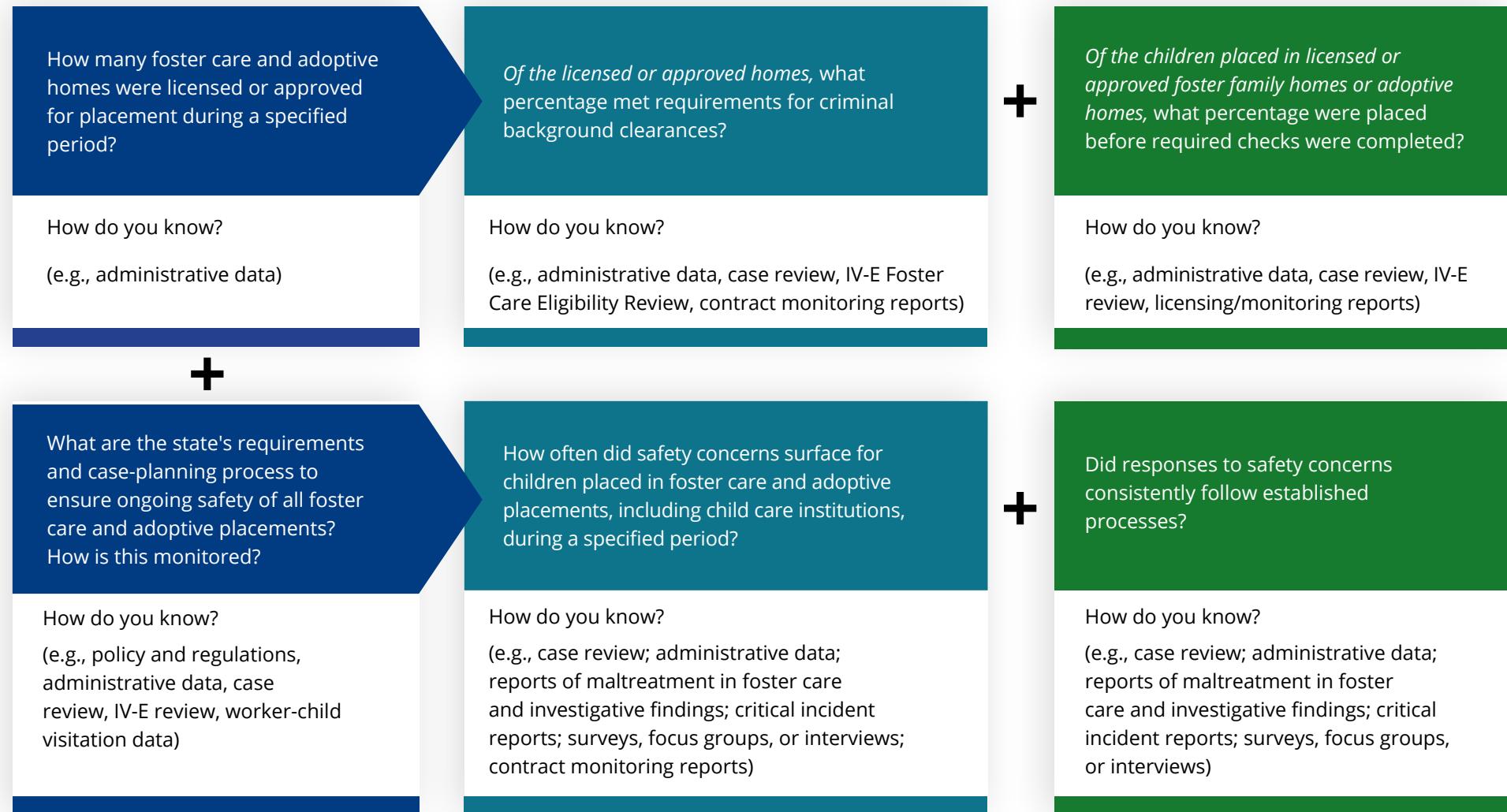
Item 34. Requirements for Criminal Background Checks

Statewide Assessment question: How well is the foster and adoptive parent licensing, recruitment, and retention system functioning statewide to ensure that the 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?

This item addresses:

- (1) Criminal background checks for prospective foster and adoptive parents and other adults living in their homes (*not* staff in child care institutions)
- (2) Case-planning processes that address child safety in foster and adoptive homes as well as in child care institutions

Item 34 Overview Exhibit



Item 34 Source Tables

Subquestion 34A. What is the state's process for ensuring that the state complies with federal requirements for criminal background clearances as related to licensing or approving foster care and adoptive homes?

✓	Possible Data Sources	Title/Description	Time Period	Scope of Data	Data Limitations
	Description of state policy or regulation for conducting fingerprint-based criminal background checks and child abuse and neglect registry maintained by the state for information on any prospective foster or adoptive parent and any other adult living in the home				
	Description of process for implementing the state policy/regulation for foster or adoptive homes				
	Other				
	None*				

Subquestion 34B. What evidence does the state have to demonstrate that licensed or approved foster and adoptive homes, including those homes managed by private child placement agencies licensed by the state, have met the criminal background clearance requirements?

✓	Possible Data Sources	Title/Description	Time Period	Scope of Data	Data Limitations
	Administrative data				
	Case review				
	Title IV-E Foster Care Eligibility Review findings				
	Contract monitoring reports				
	Other				
	None*				

Subquestion 34C. How does the state ensure that it has a case-planning process in place that includes provisions for addressing the safety of children in foster care and adoptive placements, including child care institutions? What are the state's requirements and other processes to ensure ongoing safety of all foster care and adoptive placements, including child care institutions? (For example, rerunning criminal background checks, assessing child safety while in placement or while on trial home visits, responding to allegations of child maltreatment in out-of-home placements, responding to allegations of policy violations in out-of-home placements, responding to children on runaway status, etc.)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Possible Data Sources	Title/Description	Time Period	Scope of Data	Data Limitations
	Policies and regulations for foster and adoptive homes to ensure ongoing child safety				
	Policies and regulations for child care institutions to ensure ongoing child safety				
	Contract requirements				
	Interviews or focus groups with program managers, supervisors, caseworkers, judges, and attorneys to explore established processes to ensure safety				
	Other				
	None*				

Subquestion 34D. How often did safety concerns surface for children placed in licensed foster homes, adoptive homes, and child care institutions?

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Possible Data Sources	Title/Description	Time Period	Scope of Data	Data Limitations
	Administrative data (e.g., reports of alleged maltreatment for children in foster homes, adoptive homes, and child care institutions; critical incident reports)				
	Statewide data indicator data (e.g., maltreatment in care data)				
	Case reviews (CFSR Onsite Review Instrument Item 3, questions E, F, and F1)				
	Other				
	None*				

Subquestion 34E. What evidence does the state have to demonstrate that it consistently followed the processes (as described in 34C) for ensuring the ongoing safety of children in foster care and adoptive placements, including child care institutions? Are there differences between contracted providers who recruit and manage homes or operate facilities and those that are recruited and managed by the child welfare agency?

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Possible Data Sources	Title/Description	Time Period	Scope of Data	Data Limitations
	Case reviews (CFSR Onsite Review Instrument Item 3, questions E,F, and F1, and Item 14)				
	Title IV-E Review				
	Administrative data (e.g., reports of maltreatment in foster care, investigative findings, critical incident reports)				
	Worker-child visitation data				
	Contract monitoring reports				
	Surveys, focus groups, or interviews with parties responsible for ensuring ongoing safety of foster care placements (for example, by conducting criminal background checks for foster or adoptive homes, assessing child safety while in placement or while on trial home visits, responding to allegations of child maltreatment in out-of-home placements, responding to allegations of policy violations in out-of-home placements, responding to children on runaway status, etc.)				
	Surveys, focus groups, or interviews with caseworkers, supervisors, judges, parents, or youth to explore how established processes for maintaining safety of placements are followed				
	Other				
	None*				

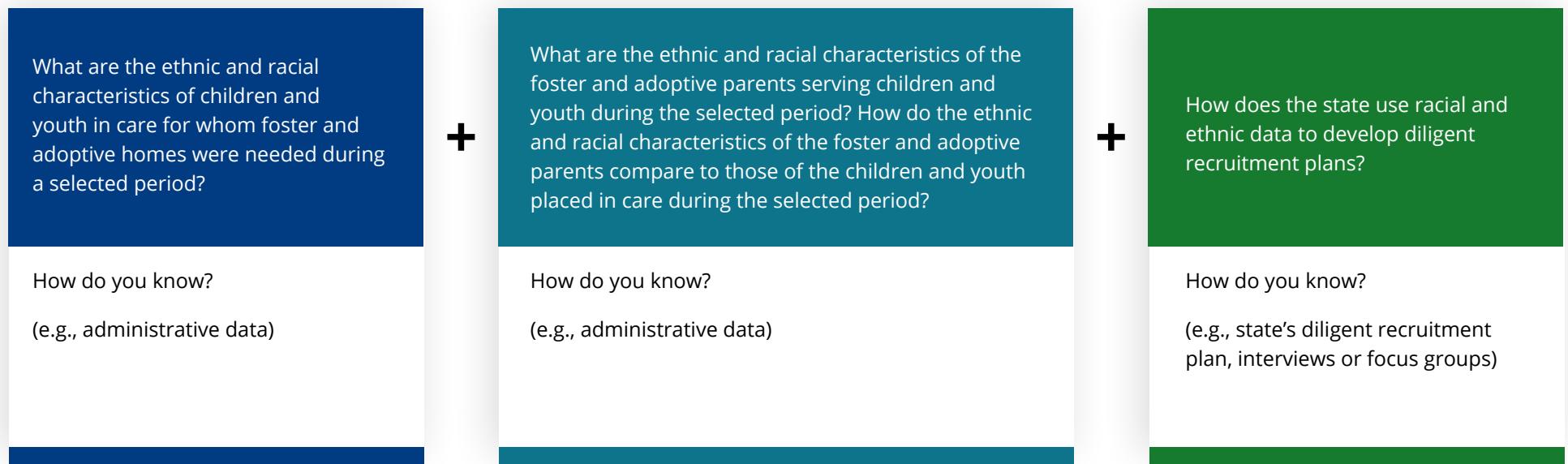
Item 34 Review.

Are the available data sources sufficient to answer all components of the Statewide Assessment question using an appropriate measurement approach?	YES	NO*	
If not, what additional data or information needs to be collected or generated?*			
Are there data limitations or data quality concerns that need to be addressed to support quality evidence?	YES*	NO	
Do any of the data sources listed fall outside the scope of the Statewide Assessment question (e.g., address other questions or root causes)?	YES	NO	

Item 35. Diligent Recruitment of Foster and Adoptive Homes

Statewide Assessment question: How well is the foster and adoptive parent licensing, recruitment, and retention system functioning to ensure that the process for ensuring the diligent recruitment of potential foster and adoptive families who reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children in the state for whom foster and adoptive homes are needed is occurring statewide?

Item 35 Overview Exhibit



Item 35 Source Tables

Subquestion 35A. What is the state's process for recruiting foster and adoptive parents? (e.g., what data and information are used to develop the plan and determine whether the plan addresses statewide needs; how the plan is monitored, including whether recruitment targets are met; and how often the plan is reviewed and revised to reflect needs statewide)

✓	Possible Data Sources	Title/Description	Time Period	Scope of Data	Data Limitations
	Description of process, including what data are used to inform the plan and how it is monitored and revised to reflect needs statewide				
	CFSP				
	APSR				
	Other				
	None*				

Subquestion 35B. What evidence does the state rely on to assess the ethnic diversity of the foster care population? Of available foster and adoptive families?

✓	Possible Data Sources	Title/Description	Time Period	Scope of Data	Data Limitations
	Description of state's process				
	Administrative data				
	Other				
	None*				

Subquestion 35C. How do the ethnic and racial characteristics of foster and adoptive parents compare to those of the children and youth placed in care during a selected period?

✓	Possible Data Sources	Title/Description	Time Period	Scope of Data	Data Limitations
	Administrative data				
	Other				
	None*				

Subquestion 35D. How does the state use racial and ethnic data (evidence referenced in 35B) to develop diligent recruitment plans? If potential foster and adoptive families do not reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children in the state for whom foster and adoptive homes are needed, what is the state's process for addressing the gaps?

✓	Possible Data Sources	Title/Description	Time Period	Scope of Data	Data Limitations
	Description of the state's process				
	Interviews and focus groups with program managers and supervisors				
	Other				
	None*				

Item 35 Review.

Are the available data sources sufficient to answer all components of the Statewide Assessment question using an appropriate measurement approach?	YES	NO*	
If not, what additional data or information needs to be collected or generated?*			
Are there data limitations or data quality concerns that need to be addressed to support quality evidence?	YES*	NO	
Do any of the data sources listed fall outside the scope of the Statewide Assessment question (e.g., address other questions or root causes)?	YES	NO	

Item 36. State Use of Cross-Jurisdictional Resources for Permanent Placement

Statewide Assessment question: How well is the foster and adoptive parent licensing, recruitment, and retention system functioning to ensure that the process for ensuring the effective use of cross-jurisdictional resources to facilitate timely adoptive or permanent placements for waiting children is occurring statewide?

Item 36 Overview Exhibit



Item 36 Source Tables

Subquestion 36A. What cross-jurisdictional tools and resources are used to facilitate timely adoptive or permanent placements *within the state* for waiting children?

✓	Possible Data Sources	Title/Description	Time Period	Scope of Data	Data Limitations
	Description of tools and resources used for in-state cross-jurisdictional placements				
	Memoranda of understanding				
	CFSP (tools and resources)				
	Survey, interviews, or focus groups				
	Other				
	None*				

Subquestion 36B. What is the state's process for using cross-jurisdictional resources to facilitate timely adoptive or permanent placements *within the state* for waiting children? How does the state know whether its processes, tools, and resources are effective?

✓	Possible Data Sources	Title/Description	Time Period	Scope of Data	Data Limitations
	Description of state procedures and protocols for in-state cross-jurisdictional placements				
	Memoranda of understanding				
	CFSP (tools and resources)				
	Administrative data				
	Survey, interviews, or focus groups				
	Other				
	None*				

Subquestion 36C. What cross-jurisdictional tools and resources are used (e.g., exchanges, national recruitment, or agreements with border states) to facilitate timely adoptive or permanent placements *outside of the state* for waiting children?

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Possible Data Sources	Title/Description	Time Period	Scope of Data	Data Limitations
	Description of tools and resources used for out-of-state cross-jurisdictional placements				
	Memoranda of understanding				
	CFSP (tools and resources)				
	Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC) requests				
	Other				
	None*				

Subquestion 36D. What is the state's process for using cross-jurisdictional resources to facilitate timely adoptive or permanent placements *outside of the state* for waiting children? How does the state know whether its processes, tools, and resources are effective?

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Possible Data Sources	Title/Description	Time Period	Scope of Data	Data Limitations
	Description of state procedures and protocols for cross-jurisdictional placements				
	Memoranda of understanding				
	CFSP (tools and resources)				
	Administrative data				
	ICPC requests and responses				
	Other				
	None*				

Subquestion 36E. What is the state's process for completing ICPC home study requests from other states?

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Possible Data Sources	Title/Description	Time Period	Scope of Data	Data Limitations
	Description of state procedures and protocols for ICPC requests				
	Other				
	None*				

Subquestion 36F. For what percentage of cases did the state complete an ICPC request for home study within the 60-day federal requirement?

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Possible Data Sources	Title/Description	Time Period	Scope of Data	Data Limitations
	Administrative data				
	ICPC requests				
	Other				
	None*				

Item 36 Review.

Are the available data sources sufficient to answer all components of the Statewide Assessment question using an appropriate measurement approach?	YES	NO*	
If not, what additional data or information needs to be collected or generated?*			
Are there data limitations or data quality concerns that need to be addressed to support quality evidence?	YES*	NO	
Do any of the data sources listed fall outside the scope of the Statewide Assessment question (e.g., address other questions or root causes)?	YES	NO	

B. Planning Worksheet Table for New Data Sources or Data Quality Improvements

Complete this table to identify where the state team will fill gaps and address limitations to provide relevant and timely data and information that fully address the assessment questions for the systemic factor. Rows in this table should be completed when the following conditions exist: 1) Available data sources are not sufficient to answer all components of the Statewide Assessment question for the systemic factor item; 2) Additional information or data needs to be collected or generated; or 3) Data limitations or data quality issues need to be addressed to support quality evidence.

Systemic Factor and Item	Question to Answer	Information or Data Source	Time Period/Scope	Method of Collection/Development	Expected Completion Date	Lead	Notes

Systemic Factor and Item	Question to Answer	Information or Data Source	Time Period/Scope	Method of Collection/Development	Expected Completion Date	Lead	Notes

APPENDIX: Data Analysis Checklist

Excerpted from the Children's Bureau's [CFSRs: Guiding Principles, Framework, and Tools for the Statewide Assessment Process](#)

The Data Analysis Checklist provides a short, easy way to help assess the quality and relevance of evidence used for analysis. The questions focus on the scope and methods used to generate evidence and are designed to confirm that the information is relevant and reliable to use for analysis and to support observations and conclusions. This checklist is an optional resource that may be helpful for individuals planning, conducting, and/or reviewing data analysis done for a variety of purposes, including, but not limited to, Child and Family Services Plans (CFSPs), Annual Progress and Services Reports (APSRs), CFSR Statewide Assessments, Program Improvement Plans (PIPs), Court Improvement Program (CIP) Self-Assessments, and state program evaluations.



The Question

Is it clear what question this analysis is answering?

- ♦ What is the analytic question?¹



The Evidence/Data/Methodology

Can you identify the source and characteristics of the data? Are the data provided, and are they complete?

- ♦ What is the data source?
- ♦ How current are the data (through what month, quarter, year)?

Is the information presented clearly labeled?

Does the population selected for the analysis match the question?

- ♦ What population is selected for analysis?

Does the method of analysis match the question being asked or the observation being made?

- ♦ If the analysis is about a system outcome, does the method use aggregate data?
- ♦ If the analysis is about a root cause, does the analysis rely on targeted data collection, either qualitative or quantitative?
- ♦ If the analysis is about the quality of a system of care, does it rely on qualitative data collection, such as through focus groups?

Should there be a comparison group, and if so, is it included in the analysis?

- ♦ What population is used for comparison?

Does the analysis consider variation (e.g., by place, by population, over time)?

Does the analysis consider whether observed variations may be a consequence of disparities in systems, structures, policies, and/or practices?

Are the limitations of the data identified?

Is the data source accurate and reliable?

Does the analysis answer the question?

¹ A research or analytic question is designed to guide the acquisition and generation of evidence that when processed (or analyzed) increases one's knowledge and is related to a theory or a hypothesis. A good data analytic question specifies the target population and the measurable change that population should experience. Sometimes the question is descriptive (e.g., How often do children placed in care move during their first year in care?), sometimes it is comparative (e.g., Are children who enter care in 2021 moving more now in their first year of care as compared with children placed in care in 2019?), and sometimes it is causal (e.g., To what extent are children who were placed in care in 2021 moving more in their first year of care because of pandemic-related issues?).



The Conclusion

- Are the arguments summarized and clear?
- Are all the graphic representations of the data clearly explained in the narrative?
- Were associated factors or data used to better inform the analysis?
 - ♦ For example, if the analysis considered timely permanence, did it also refer to performance on reentry to care?
- Is the conclusion verified or contradicted by other sources of data?
 - ♦ For example, did feedback from individuals with vested interests, focus groups, surveys, or other administrative data support the analytic findings or suggest possible alternatives?
- Are there perspectives not accounted for in the analysis?
- Do the results suggest that further analysis may be indicated?

After a decade of CQI system and performance measurement work, advancements in our knowledge of implementation science,² the introduction and application of the CQI [change and implementation process](#), and the call to action to transform and create equitable child welfare systems, the Children's Bureau believes that states are well-positioned to complete high-quality Statewide Assessments.

² Annie E. Casey Foundation. (August 12, 2017). [What is implementation science?](#) [blog post].

Find More CFSR Planning and Implementation Tools and Supports

Access [CFSR Systemic Factor Data Planning Worksheets](#) for the other six systemic factors.

Find additional [CFSR Round 4 Planning and Implementation Tools](#) that support:

- Strengthening use of data and evidence
- Communicating with partners about the CFSR
- Engaging youth and families with lived experience in the CFSR process
- Getting ready for Round 4

The Center for States is available to provide state child welfare agencies with support in data planning and preparing for CFSR Round 4. To request services tailored to your needs, email capacityinfo@icfi.com or contact your [Center for States Liaison](#).

Additional Resources on Assessing Systemic Factor Functioning and the CFSR Statewide Assessment

Children's Bureau. (2022). [Assessing Systemic Factor Functioning Using Data and Evidence](#).

Children's Bureau. (2022). [CFSRs: Guiding Principles, Framework, and Tools for the Statewide Assessment Process](#).

Children's Bureau. (April 6, 2022). [CFSR Round 4 National Call #6: Systemic Factors and Stakeholder Interview Guide](#). (Webinar video)

Children's Bureau. (2022). [CFSR Procedures Manual](#). (Chapter 2)

Children's Bureau. (2022). [Statewide Assessment Instrument](#). (Section IV, includes guiding questions)

Children's Bureau. (2020). [Systemic Factors—Results From the CFSRs: 2015–2018](#).

JBS International. [CFSR Information Portal. CFSR Round 4 Resources](#). (Webpage)

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