	GEORGIA DIVISION OF FAMILY AND CHILDREN SERVICES CHILD WELFARE POLICY MANUAL			
	Chapter:	(1) Administration	**Effective Date:**	January 2020
	Policy Title:	Specific Goals in State Law for Children in Foster Care Over 24 Months		
	Policy Number:	1.11	**Previous Policy #:**	N/A

CODES/REFERENCES

O.C.G.A. § 49-5-19 Annual Report on Children and Youth Services
Title IV-E of the Social Security Act Section 471(a)(14)
2 U.S.C. § 671/Public Law 96-272

REQUIREMENTS

The Georgia Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS) shall:

1. *Formulate for each fiscal year, a specific goal as to the maximum number of children (in absolute numbers or as a percentage of all children in foster care receiving assistance under a title IV-E program) who at any given time during the fiscal year will have been in foster care for over 24 months.*
2. Submit a report to the Governor each year that includes an analysis of goals to ensure that no more than 25 percent of children remain in the foster care system under Title IV-E of the Social Security Act for a period of 24 months or longer.
3. *Take the following steps to achieve the specific goal established:*
   a. Review data indicators on a quarterly basis;
   b. Conduct targeted quality assurance reviews in the Quality Case Reviews (QCR);
   c. Include policies on permanency planning in DFCS' Child Welfare Policy Manual;
   d. Include goals in the Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP) and Annual Progress and Services Review (APSR);
   e. Implement targeted solutions to resolve concerns and ensure permanency efforts are meeting the needs of the children; and
   f. Include the specific goals in the Annual Report on Children and Youth report submitted to the Governor.

PROCEDURES

Designated DFCS staff will:

1. On a quarterly basis:
   a. Identify the number of children, under the age of 18, in family or institutional foster care for a period of 24 months or longer and compare that data with the previous year's/quarter's data;
   b. Review and analyze data and trend information to ensure targeted goals are being met; and
   c. Conduct targeted quality reviews in the Quality Case Reviews (QCR).
2. Include the specific goals in the Annual Report on Children and Youth for submission to the Governor.

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3. Include the specific goals and steps in the submission of the Annual Progress and Services Review (APSR).
4. Take the following actions if the data indicate that more than 25 percent of children will remain in the foster care system under Title IV-E of the Social Security Act for a period of 24 months or longer:
    a. Identification of barriers for not meeting the specific goal. Methods of identification may include:
        i. Reviewing data indicators more frequently to monitor goal achievement; and
        ii. Targeted reviews in the QCR.
    b. Discussion of data indicators and specific goals in ongoing leadership meetings.
    c. Implementation of agency wide or targeted solutions, such as:
        i. Use of the permanency timeline to track ongoing case progress;
        ii. Routinely occurring case consults, including a 12-month consult that includes a participant at a higher level than Supervisor to ensure the case is moving to permanency;
        iii. Permanency Roundtables for cases where the child has no identified permanent resource; and
        iv. Partner with Office of General Counsel and the Court Improvement Project where legal delays to permanency exist.

PRACTICE GUIDANCE

The Quality Assurance (QA)/Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) Unit conducts the Quality Case Reviews (QCR) to evaluate the quality of services provided to children and families. QCR also improve overall safety, permanency, and well-being outcomes for children and families by improving the quality of case work provided by county and regional staff.

The DFCS Placement and Permanency Section reviews data and information on a regular basis regarding children remaining in care for 24 months or longer. When trends are identified that would adversely affect the goal that no more than 25 percent of children remain in the foster care system under Title IV-E of the Social Security Act for a period of 24 months or longer, specific strategies are implemented to resolve those concerns and ensure Georgia's permanency efforts are meeting the needs of the children. The Placement and Permanency Section also presents a summary analysis and updated information on those strategies at PACCC and statewide leadership meetings.

FORMS AND TOOLS

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