

# ACF

Administration  
for Children  
and Families

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**  
**Administration on Children, Youth and Families**

**1. Log No:** ACYF-CB-IM-07-02

**2. Issuance Date:** February 5, 2007

**3. Originating Office:** Children's Bureau

**4. Key Words:** Child and Family Services Reviews, Item Ratings

## INFORMATION MEMORANDUM

**To:** State and Territorial Agencies Administering or Supervising the Administration of Titles IV-B and IV-E of the Social Security Act, ACF Regional Administrators

**Subject:** Ratings for the Child and Family Service Reviews

**Legal and Related References:** Titles IV-B and IV-E of the Social Security Act, the Social Security Act Amendments of 1994 (Public Law 103-432), 45 CFR 1355.34 (a) and (b), ACYF-CB-IM-03-05

**Purpose:** The purpose of this Information Memorandum is to provide amended clarification on rating the items under each of the seven outcomes evaluated during the second round of Child and Family Service Reviews.

**Information:** In accordance with 45 CFR 1355.34(a) and (b), a State must, in part, meet national standards for certain Statewide data indicators and achieve certain outcomes for children and families in order to be determined in substantial conformity in a child and family service review (CFSR). The outcomes included in the reviews fall into three domains: safety; permanency; and child and family well-being. Within each domain, the CFSR assesses specific outcomes, through the on-site review and statewide assessment, using a set of performance items to evaluate each outcome. In rating individual cases on both the outcomes and the items, the on-site review instrument provides standard criteria for determining if an outcome has been substantially achieved or if an item is a *Strength* or an *Area Needing Improvement* for the case.

Beyond the individual case ratings, the regulations at 45 CFR 1355.34(b)(3)(ii) set forth the percentage of cases where an outcome must be rated as substantially achieved in order for the outcome to be in substantial conformity for the State as a whole. For the initial round of CFSRs, that percentage of cases was 90 percent. In the upcoming second round of reviews, that percentage increases to 95 percent.

For the initial round of CFSRs, we used an 85 percent threshold for determining if items within the outcomes were rated a *Strength* or *Areas Needing Improvement*, considering a 90 percent compliance rate for determining substantial conformity. We explained our rationale for adopting the 85 percent threshold in ACYF-CB-IM-03-05.

In the second round of reviews, we are increasing our threshold for rating items as a *Strength* or *Area Needing Improvement* to 90 percent, based on the increase in the percentage of substantially achieved cases required for a determination of substantial conformity on an outcome to 95 percent. In making this decision, we have used the same rationale explained in ACYF-CB-IM-03-05.

We will apply the new percentages described in this Information Memorandum in final reports for all States in the second round of CFSRs.

**Inquires to:** Regional Child Welfare Program Managers, Regions I-X.

/s/

Joan E. Ohl  
Commissioner  
Administration on Children, Youth and Families