

Statewide Information System: Systemic Factor Data Planning Worksheet



Capacity Building
CENTER FOR STATES

CFSR Round 4 Planning and Implementation Tool

This document was updated by the National Child Welfare Center for Innovation and Advancement in 2025.

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—the **statewide information system**.² A well-functioning statewide information system houses valid and accurate data and supports the agency in delivering appropriate services to children and families, monitoring safety, and conducting continuous quality improvement (CQI) activities.

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](#).³ 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 a statewide information system. 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 in the Statewide Assessment.

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 statewide information system functioning
- ♦ 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 19: Statewide Information System Appendix: Data Analysis Checklist](#)

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.
- ♦ States should consider how their data, policies, and practices may reflect or contribute to variations in services or outcomes for different 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 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 CQI data
- ♦ Federal and state reviews and audits
- ♦ Program evaluations

³ 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) (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.

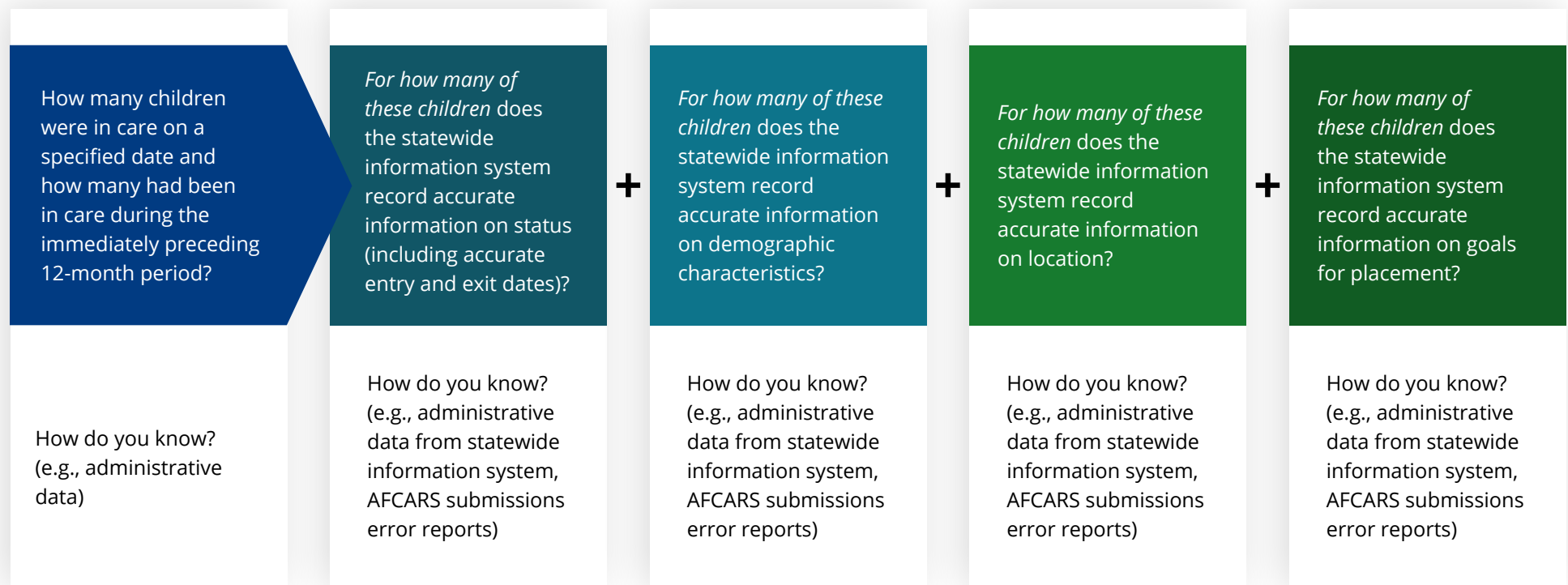
A. Planning Worksheet Tables for Existing Data Sources

In the Statewide Assessment, states provide evidence on one item related to the functioning of their statewide information system (item 19). The following section can help state teams consider available data sources and evidence for exploring systemic factor federal requirements. The overview exhibit presents 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 19. Statewide Information System

Statewide Assessment question: How well is the statewide information system functioning statewide to ensure that, at a minimum, the state can readily identify the status, demographic characteristics, location, and goals for the placement of every child who is (or within the immediately preceding 12 months, has been) in foster care?

Item 19 Overview Exhibit



Item 19 Source Tables

Subquestion 19A. For all children in foster care during a specific period and all the children who had been in foster care within the immediately preceding 12-month period, does the statewide information system record accurate information on:

- ♦ Status (whether the child is in foster care or no longer in care)
- ♦ Demographic characteristics (date of birth, sex, race, ethnicity, disability, medically diagnosed condition requiring special care)
- ♦ Placement location (child's physical location)
- ♦ Goals for placement (permanency goals of reunification, adoption, guardianship, another planned permanent living arrangement, or not yet established)

✓	Possible Data Sources	Title/Description	Time Period	Scope of Data	Data Limitations
	Administrative data from the statewide information system that demonstrate accuracy				
	Error reports from the AFCARS submissions (Note: These should not be used as the sole source of evidence to demonstrate functioning.)				
	Data Quality Plan				
	Other				
	None*				

Subquestion 19B. For all children who were in foster care during a specific period, are there data that demonstrate timely entry of information for the four data elements listed in 19A as possible data sources?

✓	Possible Data Sources	Title/Description	Time Period	Scope of Data	Data Limitations
	Administrative data from the statewide information system (e.g., date and time stamps recording data entry)				
	Data quality plan				
	Other				
	None*				

Subquestion 19C. What is the state's process for ensuring that the data related to the four elements are accurate and entered into the statewide information system in a timely manner? How does that process affect the accuracy and timeliness of the data?

✓	Possible Data Sources	Title/Description	Time Period	Scope of Data	Data Limitations
	Agency policies, procedures, or and/or guidelines regarding data entry				
	Findings from Comprehensive Child Welfare Information System (CCWIS) data quality plan or AFCARS improvement plan				
	Targeted case review to ensure the data for the four elements match what is in the information system				
	System-generated data management reports related to timeliness of data entry				
	Other				
	None*				

Subquestion 19D. If data are found to be inaccurate or missing, what explains the inaccurate or missing data?

✓	Possible Data Sources	Title/Description	Time Period	Scope of Data	Data Limitations
	Interviews, surveys, or focus groups with agency staff responsible for data entry				
	Interviews, surveys, or focus groups with IT QA staff				
	Other				
	None*				

Item 19 Review

Are the available data sources sufficient to answer all components of the Assessment question using an appropriate measurement approach?	YES		NO*	
If not, what additional data or information needs to be collected or generated?*				
Are there any variations in performance across the state or jurisdiction that impact statewide functioning of this item?	YES		NO	
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

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)?

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?

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

Need Additional CFSR Support?

The National Child Welfare Center for Innovation and Advancement (NCWCIA) provides data-driven assistance to public child welfare agencies to help them identify innovative ways to address challenges and improve performance and outcomes so that children can remain safe and with their families whenever possible.

To request services tailored to your needs, email NCWCIA-Info@jbsinternational.com or contact your [NCWCIA innovation and advancement navigator](#).

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. (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: 2015-2019](#).

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

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