

# Agency Responsiveness to the Community: 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.<sup>1</sup>

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—**agency responsiveness to the community**. Agency responsiveness is achieved through ongoing and meaningful engagement of individuals with a vested interest in the child welfare system—including young people and families, tribes, caregivers, legal and judicial communities, service providers, and other partners—and coordination of services to best meet the needs of children, young people, and families.

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](#).<sup>2</sup> Both resources highlight potential sources of relevant information and data that child welfare agencies and their partners can use to explore and demonstrate evidence of their agency responsiveness to the community. 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.

<sup>1</sup> 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](#).

<sup>2</sup> 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 agency responsiveness to the community
- ♦ 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 31: State Engagement and Consultation With Stakeholders Pursuant to the CFSP and APSR](#)
- ♦ [Item 32: Coordination of CFSP Services With Other Federal Programs](#)

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

[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 being served by the agency.
- ♦ 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

## 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)<sup>4</sup> (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.

<sup>4</sup> 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

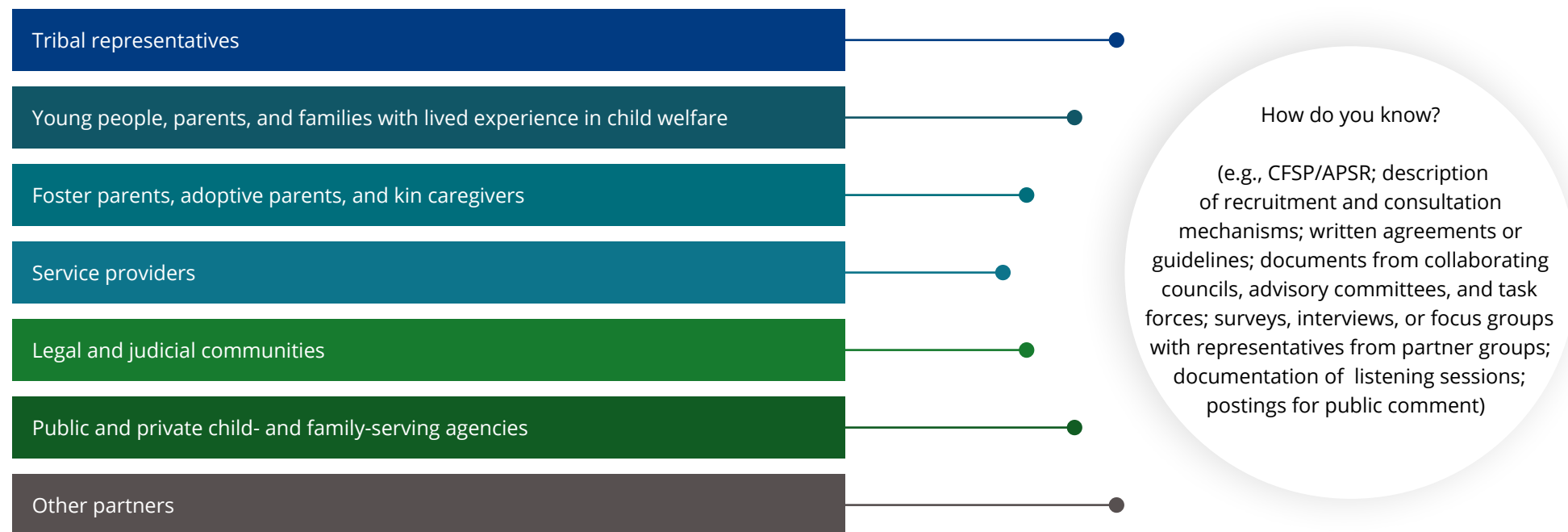
In the Statewide Assessment, states provide evidence on two items related to agency responsiveness to the community: State engagement and consultation with stakeholders pursuant to the CFSP and APSR (item 31) and coordination of CFSP services with other federal programs (item 32). The overview exhibits 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 31. State Engagement and Consultation With Stakeholders Pursuant to the CFSP and APSR

**Statewide Assessment question:** How well is the agency responsiveness to the community system functioning statewide to ensure that, in implementing the provisions of the CFSP and developing related APSRs, the state engages in ongoing consultation with tribal representatives, consumers, service providers, foster care providers, the juvenile court, and other public and private child- and family-serving agencies and includes the major concerns of these representatives in the goals, objectives, and annual updates of the CFSP?

#### Item 31 Overview Exhibit

**Engagement and ongoing consultation of the following groups in the CFSP and APSR:**



## Item 31 Source Tables

**Subquestion 31A.** When developing and implementing the provisions of the CFSP and developing related APSRs, how does the agency engage in ongoing consultation with tribal representatives, consumers, service providers, foster care providers, the juvenile court, and other public and private child- and family-serving agencies? How is the information gathered used?

	Possible Data Sources	Title/Description	Time Period	Scope of Data	Data Limitations
	CFSP/APSR				
—	Description of consultation mechanisms (include purpose, participants, frequency, etc.)				
	Description of recruitment activities				
	Agency policies, written agreements, or guidelines (e.g., Memorandum of Agreement or Memorandum of Understanding)				
	State-level collaborating councils or task forces				
	CIP advisory committees				
	Other				
	None*				

## Subquestion 31B.

How does the state identify and engage with communities that need an enhanced service array and access to services (e.g., families who are homeless, people with disabilities, people who are incarcerated)?

✓	Possible Data Sources	Title/Description	Time Period	Scope of Data	Data Limitations
	CFSP/APSR				

✓	Possible Data Sources	Title/Description	Time Period	Scope of Data	Data Limitations
	Description of consultation mechanisms (include purpose, participants, frequency, etc.)				
	Description of recruitment activities				
	Agency policies, written agreements, or guidelines (e.g., MOA or MOU)				
	State-level collaborating councils or task forces				
	CIP advisory committees				
	Other				
	None*				

**Subquestion 31C.** With which stakeholder groups did the agency consult? Were the groups representative of all jurisdictions in the state? Did the stakeholder groups include at least the following:

- All appropriate offices and agencies within the state agency?
- A wide array of state, local, tribal, and community-based agencies; organizations; and service providers across the state?
- Parents, including birth and adoptive parents?
- Families with a member with a disability?
- Children and youth, , including those currently receiving services and those who have emancipated from care?
- Caregivers, both relative and nonrelative?

✓	Possible Data Sources	Title/Description	Time Period	Scope of Data	Data Limitations
	CFSP/APSR				
	CIP reports				
	Meeting calendars and meeting minutes				
	Administrative data from IT systems (e.g., group feedback on state website)				
	Interviews or focus groups with representatives				
	Other				

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

**Subquestion 31D.** What was the agency's process for understanding and documenting the major concerns and interests of the representatives from various groups? ("Representatives" refers to members of the groups noted in subquestions 31 A–C.)

✓	Possible Data Sources	Title/Description	Time Period	Scope of Data	Data Limitations
	CFSP/APSR				
	Surveys, interviews, or focus groups with agency staff and representatives of various groups				
	Other				
	None*				

**Subquestion 31E.** What evidence does the state have to show that it addresses the major concerns of representatives in the goals, objectives, and annual updates of the CFSP? ("Representatives" refers to members of the groups noted in subquestions 31 A–C.)

✓	Possible Data Sources	Title/Description	Time Period	Scope of Data	Data Limitations
	CFSP/APSR				
	CIP reports				
	Surveys, interviews, or focus groups with representatives				
	List of program/practice modifications or enhancements that have occurred as a result of ongoing consultations				
	Joint statements				
	Other				
	None*				

**Subquestion 31F.** What were the representatives' perceptions of how the agency addressed their concerns in the goals, objectives, and annual updates of the CFSP (e.g., Were their concerns heard? Could they see their concerns and recommendations reflected in the agency's CFSP/APSR or program improvement efforts)? How often did the agency engage with them? ("Representatives" refers to members of the groups noted in subquestions 31 A–C.)

✓	Possible Data Sources	Title/Description	Time Period	Scope of Data	Data Limitations
	Surveys, interviews, or focus groups with tribal representatives				
	Surveys, interviews, or focus groups with young people and families with lived experience				
	Surveys, interviews, or focus groups with foster parents, adoptive parents, and kin caregivers				
	Surveys, interviews, or focus groups with service providers				
	Surveys, interviews, or focus groups with representatives of legal and judicial communities				
	Surveys, interviews, or focus groups with public and private child- and family-serving agency representatives				
	Surveys, interviews, or focus groups with other partners				
	Other				
	None*				



**Subquestion 31G.** What gaps exist in the consultation process that may negatively impact progress toward shared goals and strategic plans to improve safety, permanency, and well-being outcomes for children and families?

- ♦ To what extent are there other groups or entities with which the state consults that are not represented here?
- ♦ What is the impact on potential gaps in knowledge needed to develop and implement a comprehensive CFSP?
- ♦ What are the barriers or challenges, if any, to engaging with particular groups?

✓	Possible Data Sources	Title/Description	Time Period	Scope of Data	Data Limitations
	CFSP/APSR				
	Surveys, interviews, or focus groups				
	Other				
	None*				

**Item 31 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 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	

## Item 32. Coordination of CFSP Services With Other Federal Programs

**Statewide Assessment question:** How well is the agency responsiveness to the community system functioning statewide to ensure that the state's services under the CFSP are coordinated with services or benefits of other federal or federally assisted programs serving the same population?

### Item 32 Overview Exhibit

What other federal or federally assisted programs serve the same children and families as the child welfare system?

These may include, for example:

- ♦ Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
- ♦ Medicaid
- ♦ Child Care
- ♦ Head Start
- ♦ Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- ♦ Housing and Urban Development (HUD) programs
- ♦ Social Security
- ♦ Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP)
- ♦ Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP) programs
- ♦ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration (SAMHSA) programs
- ♦ Federal demonstration grants
- ♦ Quality improvement centers
- ♦ Other

How is the state partnering with these programs and implementing processes to promote coordination of services?

How do you know?

(e.g., CFSP, Comprehensive Child Welfare Information System (CCWIS) Advance Planning Document and other documentation, agency partner's federal plans, MOUs, data-sharing agreements, multidisciplinary team reports and documentation, referral protocols, joint staffing protocols, focus groups or interviews with program representatives)

Which child welfare services and other federal or federally assisted program services or benefits are coordinated?

How do you know?

(e.g., service utilization data; program coordination descriptions; surveys, interviews, or focus groups with program representatives, parents, youth, and caseworkers)

**Subquestion 32A.** What federal or federally assisted programs serving the same population does the state partner with to provide services? What services are provided? These programs may include, for example:

TANF

Medicaid

Child Care

Head Start

SNAP

HUD programs

Social Security

CBCAP programs

OJJDP programs

SAMHSA programs

Federal demonstration grants

Quality improvement centers

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

✓	Possible Data Sources	Title/Description	Time Period	Scope of Data	Data Limitations
	Description/narrative				
	CFSP/APSR				
	Other				
	None*				

**Subquestion 32B.** What is the state's process for partnering with federal or federally assisted programs serving the same population (e.g., shared funding streams, shared data or metrics, prioritization of access for families served by the child welfare agency, use of the same providers)?

✓	Possible Data Sources	Title/Description	Time Period	Scope of Data	Data Limitations
	Description/narrative				
	CFSP/APSR				
	CCWIS Advance Planning Document and other documentation				
	Agency partners' federal plans				
	Data-sharing agreements for service coordination				
	MOU with state agencies administering federal programs				

✓	Possible Data Sources	Title/Description	Time Period	Scope of Data	Data Limitations
	Multidisciplinary team reports and documents				
	Focus groups or interviews with program representatives				
	Other				
	None*				

**Subquestion 32C.** How does the state ensure that services under the CFSP are coordinated with services or benefits of other federal or federally assisted programs serving the same population?

✓	Possible Data Sources	Title/Description	Time Period	Scope of Data	Data Limitations
	Descriptions of MOU with state agencies administering federal programs				
	Multidisciplinary team documents				
	CFSP/APSR				
	Data-sharing agreements for service coordination				
	Focus groups or interviews with representatives from federal or federally assisted programs serving the same population (including caseworkers)				
	Other				
	None*				

Subquestion 32D. What evidence does the state have that the services are coordinated?

✓	Possible Data Sources	Title/Description	Time Period	Scope of Data	Data Limitations
	Service utilization data across systems				
	MOUs/MOAs				
	Multidisciplinary team reports and documentation				
	Agency partners' federal plans				
	Data-sharing agreements for service coordination				
	Surveys, interviews, or focus groups with program representatives				
	Surveys, interviews, or focus groups with parents, youth, and caseworkers				
	Other				
	None*				

#### Item 32 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 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?<sup>1</sup>



### 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?

<sup>1</sup> 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?



## 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](mailto: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: 2015–2018](#).

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

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