



## NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

### New Jersey Qualitative Review

The Qualitative Review (QR) process assesses system performance and identifies strengths and areas for improvements to support positive outcomes for children and families. The QR is managed through Office of Quality (OQ) within the Office of Performance Management and Accountability (OPMA). QRs are conducted in sixteen (16) out of New Jersey's twenty-one (21) counties annually.

**Sample:** Each review has a random sample of 12 children; 7 of whom are in out of home placement settings, 3 of whom receive services while remaining in their own homes and 2 adolescents.

**Evaluation Instrument:** The QR examines the status of the child and family in several important areas of life, e.g. safety, stability, health, and family resourcefulness. Key practice performance areas, e.g. engagement, family teamwork, functional assessment, service effectiveness are also examined.

**Method:** Reviewer teams review select documents in the case record as well as interview parents, child, caseworker, and others who are important to the family, e.g. schools, service providers, and other caregivers. Reviewers assign a 'score' for each indicator based guidance provided in the QR protocol.

**Review Team:** Each QR Review Team 14 individuals: The Local Site Coordinator (LSC) who prepares the county and cases for review; the Team Lead, who manages the review process; and 12 Reviewers who are teamed in pairs, with each pair evaluating two cases over the course of the week. Reviewers are experienced staff at the administrative level at participate in three reviews annually.

**Team Selection and Preparation:** Review Team members include staff from across the Department of Children and Families (DCF) as well as stakeholders from the community. Reviewers participate in at least three reviews per year in order to continually build their skills. Experienced reviewers will be paired with newer reviewers to build capacity. Reviewers do not participate in QRs in Areas in which they work.

**Review Prep:** Prior to the review week, staff validate the sample, obtain family agreements to participate, create the master schedule of interviews, and secure team space to operate. Reviewers also participate in a conference call prior to the review so logistical information can be shared and questions answered.

**Review Week:** The review lasts an entire week with opportunities for team debriefing of each case reviewed, as well as an exit conference on Friday where all the results are shared in real time.

**Reporting:** Final Reports are issued by OQ which outline key themes from the review, and noting the specific strengths, and areas needing improvement that were identified in the review process. All data is maintained by the OQ and submitted as part of New Jersey's Child and Family Services Review, Program Improvement Plan and the Modified Settlement Agreement.

**Follow-up:** After the review, an improvement plan to address areas needing improvement, and building on strengths, is developed locally for each county and subsequently tracked for implementation.