



**Strengthening Families**

**Monthly Caseworker Visits**



**2018 APSR- Monthly Caseworker Visit Formula Grants Report**

The report below from CAPSS, the State’s Automated Child Welfare Information System compiled by the SCDSS Accountability, Data, and Research Unit, shows that the South Carolina Department of Social Services (SCDSS) achieved a total of 96.8% of the total visits that would be made if each child were visited once per month for Federal Fiscal Year 2017-2018 (above the required compliance of 95%). (There was a very small decrease from 97.4% for FFY 2016-2017.)

The report below also highlights that SCDSS achieved a total of 68.5% of the total number of monthly visits made by caseworkers to children in foster care in the child’s residence, exceeding the required compliance of at least 50%.

**South Carolina Department of Social Services  
Face-to-face Visits with Children in Foster Care (eff. 20190102 / ADR)  
Period: October 1, 2017 through September 30, 2018**

The total number of visits made by caseworkers on a monthly basis to children in foster care during a fiscal year must not be less than 95 percent of the total number of such visits that would occur if each child were visited once every month while in care.

<b>South Carolina Federal Caseworker Face to Face Visits Federal Fiscal Year 2017</b>	
Total number of children in the data reporting population	47,380
Total number of monthly visits made to children in the reporting population	45,850
Total number of monthly visits made to children in the reporting population that occurred in the child's residence	31,406
Percentage of visits made on a monthly basis by caseworkers to children in foster care	96.8%
Percentage of visits that occurred in the residence of the child	68.5%

**Monthly caseworker visits with Children**

Leadership in South Carolina recognizes the critical importance of caseworker visits to conduct assessments and make decisions at the individual and family level and thus, have been working to systemically improve and strengthen the quality and frequency of caseworker visits. **The visits grant has been used to improve the quality of caseworker visits by leadership messaging accountability, data analysis, infrastructure improvements, and practice accountability.** In 2017-2018, with the mantra, “what gets focused, gets fixed”, Child Welfare Services Operations improved leadership’s accountability for focusing on frequent and quality case worker visits for initial and ongoing safety assessments and service provision.

CWS policies outline the basic standards for caseworker contact with children in care (Chapter 510.4 Case Planning & Management- Monthly & Ongoing Case Planning Child Contacts) and there is presently a great amount of work being conducted to identify key barriers to timely, meaningful, and impactful caseworker

contacts. **To ensure that statutory performance standards are met**, the agency has major reform work in process to solidify and improve agency values, practice, infrastructure and CQI around caseworker visits (*Michelle H. Consent* decree, Child and Family Services Review, and development of a new casework practice model). Along with stipulated visitation frequencies, policy also requires that children are visited no less than is needed to assess their progress and ensure their needs are met.

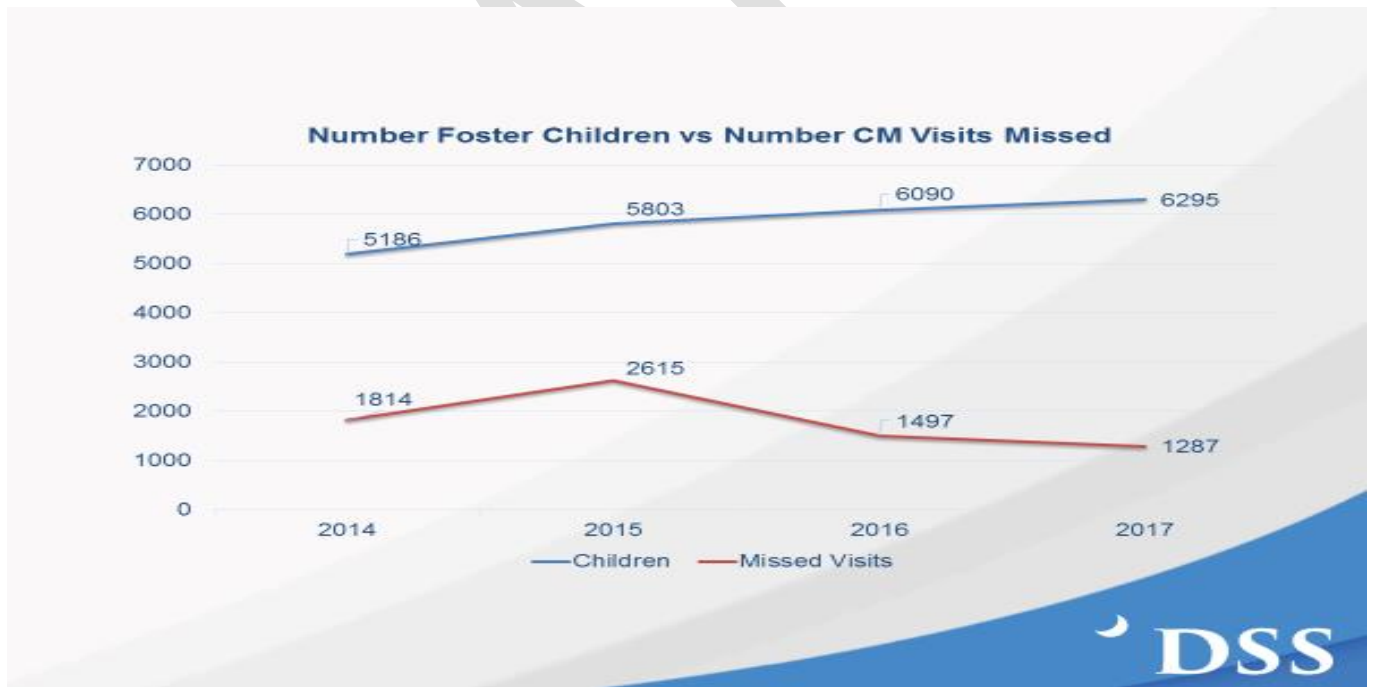
South Carolina is moving in the right direction when it comes to monthly caseworker visits with children in foster care:

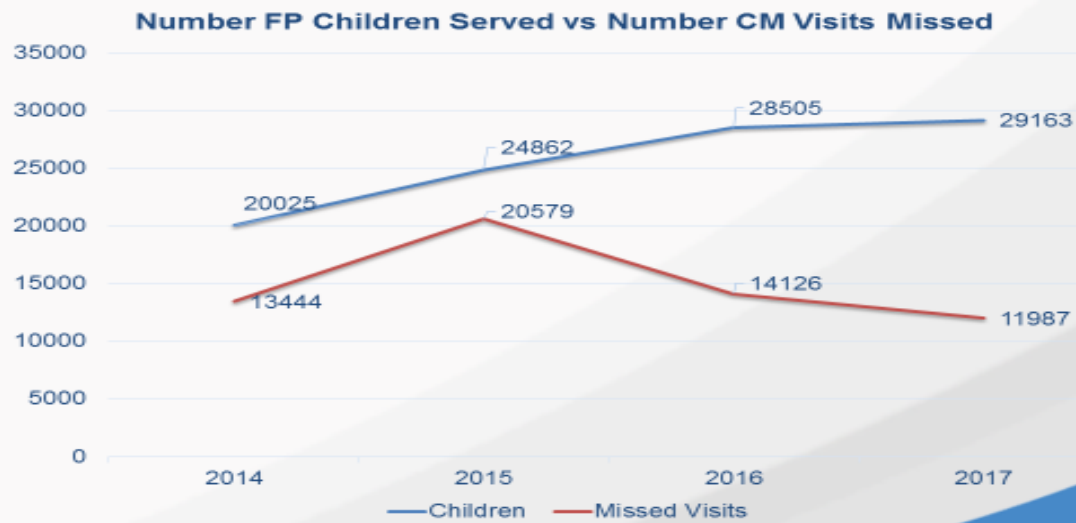
- 35,458 children served through open FC and FP cases in 2017
- 190,148 case manager visits conducted during calendar year 2017 (not including additional visits conducted with a child during the same calendar month)
- 15.6% increase in the number of children in FC and FP cases from 2015 to 2017
- 42.8% decrease in the number of missed case manager visits with children in FC and FP cases from 2015 to 2017

Face to Face Visitation with Children in Foster Care					
Calendar Year	Number of children in foster care  at least 1 complete calendar month (does not include youth 18 and older)	Number of face to face visits required  (minimum of one visit per child each full month the child is in care)	Number of face to face visits completed	Number of Missed Visits	Percent of face to face visits completed for calendar year
2014	5,186	37,138	35,324	1,814	95.1%
2015	5,803	41,302	38,687	2,615	93.7%
2016	6,090	43,501	42,004	1,497	96.6%
2017	6,295	45,528	44,241	1,287	97.2%



Face to Face Visitation with Children in Family Preservation Cases					
Calendar Year	Number of children in FP case longer than 1 complete calendar month	Number of face to face visits required (minimum of one visit per child each full month the FP case is open)	Number of face to face visits completed	Number of Missed Visits	Percent of face to face visits completed for calendar year
2014	20,025	111,967	98,523	13,444	88.0%
2015	24,862	138,229	117,650	20,579	85.1%
2016	28,505	155,617	141,491	14,126	90.9%
2017	29,163	157,894	145,907	11,987	92.4%





#### **Use of Monthly Caseworker Visit Grant**

As of 9/30/2018, we closed the GY17 of the Monthly Caseworker Visits grant, in which we expended a total of \$339,919.00. \$9,750.48 was on telecommunications and \$330,348.53 was in travel. The travel included expenses such as in-state meals, in-state mileage, and in-state lodging. The telecommunications expenses included cell phone, air cards and video conferencing payments. Since this is a 2-year grant, these amounts are for the entire grant period (10/01/2016 through 9/30/2018).

#### **Steps in FFY 2019 To Ensure Compliance**

Regional Directors, County Directors, and Supervisors communicated in staff meetings the requirements of the law and strengthened leadership practice in reinforcing the importance of monthly face-to-face casework contacts by using batch analysis reports, human service dashboard reports, and case review findings to help staff meet benchmarks and understand visits requirements. In system reform work with *Michelle H.* and the CFSR, there is a high interest in improving supervisor staffing with case managers and helping supervisors be better coaches and mentors.

Regional and County Directors are holding supervisors accountable for conducting regular staff meetings to discuss case activity including action to visit foster children; focusing on outcomes for the monthly visits, reviewing dictation to see quality of visit, and regularly using human services dashboards, batch analysis reports and push reports to assess if staff timely completing tasks.

Supervisors are working with caseworkers to ensure that they clearly understand the required tasks that comprise a face-to-face contact with a foster child on their caseload and the importance of timely documentation of their interaction with foster children on their workload (Documentation of monthly

contacts must be entered into CAPSS prior to the end of each month 510.4 Case Planning & Management Procedures: 3. Monthly & Ongoing Case Planning Child Contacts).

Caseworkers at their best, when supported and supervised, are working to improve practice in meeting with children and families to monitor children's safety and well-being; assessing the ongoing service needs of children, families and foster parents; engaging biological and foster parents in developing case plans; assessing permanency options for the child; monitoring family progress toward established goals; and ensuring that children and parents are receiving necessary services.

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