

## **SECTION 1: Statewide Assessment Summary**

### **Statewide Assessment Summary of Performance**

Alabama's statewide assessment evaluated performance across the federal Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) outcomes and systemic factors using statewide data indicators, structured case reviews conducted through the State's Quality Assurance (QA) and Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) system, stakeholder input, and administrative data sources.

The purpose of this assessment is to identify statewide performance patterns, assess substantial conformity with federal requirements, and inform the development of the State's Program Improvement Plan.

The assessment reflects a consistent statewide pattern. Alabama demonstrates relatively strong performance in key safety indicators and re-entry outcomes, while experiencing challenges in timely permanency for children with extended lengths of stay, placement disruption and stability, service delivery, and systemic factors that influence case progression and placement capacity.

#### **Safety**

Statewide data indicators demonstrate relatively strong performance in key safety indicators. Recurrence of maltreatment and maltreatment in care both reflect performance at or better than national benchmarks. Alabama's safety-related statewide data indicators have remained comparatively strong across review periods, particularly in recurrence of maltreatment, maltreatment in care, and re-entry into foster care following permanency.

Case review findings further indicate that while immediate safety concerns are generally addressed, consistency in ongoing safety assessment, service provision, and monitoring varies across cases.

Together, these findings indicate that Alabama's safety performance is comparatively strong at a population level but not consistently achieving substantial conformity at the case practice level. Statewide data trends demonstrate sustained performance in several key safety measures relative to national benchmarks, although variability remains in case-level practice consistency and application across review periods.

#### **Permanency**

Statewide data indicators demonstrate strong performance for children exiting foster care within 12 months of entry. However, this performance is not sustained for children who remain in care longer, with permanency outcomes declining for children in care beyond 12 months.

Case review findings reinforce this pattern, identifying delays in permanency decision-making, challenges in achieving timely permanency, and inconsistencies in case planning and legal progression.

These findings indicate that Alabama's permanency challenges are concentrated among children with longer lengths of stay and are influenced by system-level factors related to placement capacity, service delivery, and case progression.

### **Placement Disruption, Stability, and Family Connections**

Placement disruption and stability remain significant areas of concern. Statewide data indicators show higher rates of placement movement compared to national benchmarks.

Case review findings identify challenges in placement matching, stability, sibling placement, visitation, and maintaining family relationships and connections.

These findings indicate that placement disruption and stability, along with family connection practices, are closely linked to Alabama's broader permanency challenges.

### **Re-Entry**

Alabama's re-entry performance is stronger than national benchmarks, indicating that when permanency is achieved, it is generally stable.

These findings suggest that the State's primary challenge is not re-entry following permanency, but achieving timely permanency for children who remain in care for extended periods.

### **Well-Being**

Case review findings indicate ongoing challenges in well-being outcomes, particularly related to needs assessment, service delivery, caseworker visitation, and engagement with parents and caregivers.

These findings reflect inconsistency in practice related to identifying and meeting the needs of children and families and are closely connected to service availability and coordination.

### **Systemic Factors**

Alabama's statewide assessment included evaluation of all seven federal systemic factors. Based on this assessment, systemic factors were determined to be not in substantial conformity due to identified gaps in implementation, consistency, or system capacity.

Findings indicate challenges related to data accessibility and timeliness, case review processes, consistency of quality assurance implementation, service array availability, responsiveness to community needs, and foster and adoptive parent recruitment and retention.

These systemic factors function as key drivers of the State's performance in permanency, placement disruption and stability, and service delivery.

### **Overall Assessment Summary**

Alabama's statewide assessment demonstrates that performance challenges are not isolated to individual outcomes or practice areas. Rather, findings reflect interconnected system-level factors influencing performance across outcomes, particularly related to timely permanency for children with extended lengths of stay and placement disruption.

These findings informed the development of Alabama's Program Improvement Plan, which focuses on improving timely permanency, reducing placement disruption, strengthening placement stability, and increasing family-based placement capacity. At the same time, Alabama's assessment identified several areas of comparatively strong performance, particularly related to recurrence of maltreatment, re-entry into foster care, statewide QA/CQI infrastructure, and established statewide operational systems supporting ongoing monitoring and case review activities.

## **SECTION 2: Case Review Methodology**

### **QA/CQI Case Review System and Methodology**

As part of the statewide assessment, Alabama utilized its established Quality Assurance (QA) and Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) system to conduct structured case reviews aligned with the federal Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) Onsite Review Instrument (OSRI).

Alabama conducts approximately 75 OSRI-aligned case reviews every six months, for a total of approximately 150 reviews annually, across both foster care and in-home services cases. Reviews are conducted using a stratified random sampling methodology designed to ensure representation across program areas, geographic regions, and case types, including all regions of the state.

Each case is reviewed using standardized OSRI protocols and includes evaluation of safety, permanency, and well-being outcomes, as well as systemic factors and associated case practice items. Reviews are conducted over a defined Period Under Review (PUR), generally covering the most recent 12 to 15 months of case activity, consistent with federal CFSR expectations.

### **Quality Assurance Structure and Oversight**

Alabama's QA/CQI system incorporates a multi-level quality assurance process to ensure consistency, accuracy, and reliability in case review findings.

All case reviews are conducted by trained QA reviewers and are subject to secondary review to validate scoring and ensure consistency across reviewers. Alabama maintains an established statewide QA/CQI structure that includes standardized review methodology, stratified sampling, secondary review, calibration activities, and ongoing monitoring processes aligned with federal OSRI expectations. Ongoing calibration activities are conducted to maintain alignment with federal standards and expectations.

In addition, the Children's Bureau provides secondary oversight on a sample of Alabama's case reviews each month, supporting rating reliability, alignment with federal standards, and continuous system improvement.

### **Integration of Case Review Findings with Statewide Data**

Case review findings were analyzed in conjunction with statewide data indicators to assess performance across federal outcomes and systemic factors and to determine areas not in substantial conformity.

Alabama's QA/CQI system functions as the State's ongoing case review and performance assessment system, consistent with the requirements of 45 C.F.R. §§ 1355.32–1355.34 and aligned with federal standards for determining substantial conformity.

Findings from these reviews were used to:

- Identify areas not in substantial conformity
- Validate trends observed in statewide data indicators
- Provide qualitative context to quantitative performance measures
- Inform the development of the State's Program Improvement Plan

### **Summary**

Alabama's case review methodology reflects a structured, statewide approach to assessing case practice and system performance. The QA/CQI system provides a consistent and reliable mechanism for evaluating outcomes and systemic factors and supports continuous quality improvement aligned with federal CFSR expectations.

## **SECTION 3: Statewide Data Indicators**

### **CFSR Statewide Data Indicators**

Alabama's statewide assessment incorporates federal Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) statewide data indicators as a primary measure of performance across safety, permanency, and well-being outcomes. These indicators provide a standardized, risk-adjusted comparison of Alabama's performance relative to national benchmarks and serve as a key component in evaluating substantial conformity with federal requirements.

Statewide data indicators reflect a consistent performance pattern. Alabama demonstrates relatively strong performance in key safety indicators and re-entry into foster care, while experiencing challenges in timely permanency for children with extended lengths of stay and in placement disruption and stability.

Key statewide data indicator findings include:

- Recurrence of maltreatment at 5.8 percent, compared to 9.7 percent nationally (lower is better)
- Permanency within 12 months for children entering care at 43.1 percent, compared to 35.2 percent nationally (higher is better)
- Permanency for children in care 12–23 months at 37.2 percent, compared to 43.8 percent nationally (higher is better)
- Permanency for children in care 24 months or longer at 34.8 percent, compared to 37.3 percent nationally (higher is better)
- Re-entry into foster care at 4.6 percent, compared to 5.6 percent nationally (lower is better)
- Placement disruption, as reflected in placement stability at 7.79 moves per 1,000 days in care, compared to 4.48 nationally (lower is better)

These indicators demonstrate Alabama performs well in preventing recurrence of maltreatment and maintaining stability following permanency. However, performance declines in achievement of permanency for children who remain in care longer (e.g., 12-23 months and 24+ month cohorts) and prevention of placement moves.

These findings directly inform the State’s identification of areas not in substantial conformity, particularly in permanency for children with extended lengths of stay and placement disruption.

### **Data Profile**

The full CFSR statewide data profile is included below as the primary source of quantitative data used in this assessment.



## Alabama

Child and Family Services Review (CFSR 4) Data Profile  
AFCARS and NCANDS submissions as of 1-10-26

February 2026

### Risk-Standardized Performance Visualization

Risk-Standardized Performance (RSP) is the percent or rate of children experiencing the outcome of interest, with risk adjustment. The vertical bars in the line graph represent the lower RSP and upper RSP of the 95% RSP (confidence) interval, and national performance (NP) is the dotted black line.

#### Maltreatment in Care (victimizations/100,000 days in foster care)

9.07  
NP  
6.80  
RSP

Lower value is desired

Measured as the rate of abuse or neglect per 100,000 days in foster care in a 12-month period that children experienced while under the state's placement and care responsibility.

#### Recurrence of Maltreatment

9.7%  
NP  
5.8%  
RSP

Lower value is desired

Measured as the percent of children who were the subject of a substantiated or indicated report of maltreatment in a 12-month period and who experienced subsequent maltreatment within 12 months of the initial victimization.

### Permanency Outcomes

#### Permanency in 12 Months (entries)

35.2%  
NP  
43.1%  
RSP

Higher value is desired

Among children who entered foster care in a 12-month period, the percent who exited foster care to reunification, adoption, guardianship, or living with a relative within 12 months of their entry.

#### Permanency in 12 Months (12-23 mos)

43.8%  
NP  
37.2%  
RSP

Higher value is desired

Among children in foster care at the start of the 12-month period who had been in care for 12 to 23 months, the percent who exited to permanency in the subsequent 12 months.

#### Permanency in 12 Months (24+ mos)

37.3%  
NP  
34.8%  
RSP

Higher value is desired

Among children in foster care at the start of the 12-month period who had been in care 24 months or more, the percent who exited to permanency in the subsequent 12 months.

#### Reentry to Foster Care

5.6%  
NP  
4.6%  
RSP

Lower value is desired

Among children who discharged to permanency (excluding adoptions) in a 12-month period, the percent who reentered foster care within 12 months of exit.

#### Placement Stability (moves/1,000 days in foster care)

4.48  
NP  
7.79  
RSP

Lower value is desired

Among children who entered care in a 12-month period, the number of placement moves per 1,000 days in foster care.

#### Performance Key

- State's performance (using RSP interval) is statistically better than national performance.
- State's performance (using RSP interval) is statistically no different than national performance.
- State's performance (using RSP interval) is statistically worse than national performance.
- DQ\* Performance was not calculated due to exceeding the data quality limit on one or more data quality (DQ) checks done for the indicator. See data notes for more information.
- DQ\*\* Performance was not calculated due to data quality issues beyond the DQ checks.

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Source: Child and Family Service Review (CFSR 4) Data Profile, February 2026



## Alabama

Child and Family Services Review (CFSR 4) Data Profile  
AFCARS and NCANDS submissions as of 1-10-26

February 2026

### Risk-Standardized Performance

Risk-Standardized Performance (RSP) is the percent or rate of children experiencing the outcome of interest, with risk adjustment. To see how your state is performing relative to the national performance (NP), compare the RSP interval to the NP for the indicator. See data notes for more information on interpreting performance.

| National Performance                                              |         | 21A21B       | 21B22A                   | 22A22B                   | 22B23A                   | 23A23B                   | 23B24A                   | 24A24B                   | 24B25A                   | 25A25B                   |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|--------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| RSP                                                               |         | 44.6%        | 43.4%                    | 42.3%                    | 43.0%                    | 43.0%                    | 41.1%                    |                          |                          |                          |
| Permanency in 12 months (entries)                                 | 35.2% ▲ | RSP interval | 42.9%-46.3% <sup>1</sup> | 41.7%-45.1% <sup>1</sup> | 40.6%-44.0% <sup>1</sup> | 41.3%-44.7% <sup>1</sup> | 41.4%-44.6% <sup>1</sup> | 41.4%-44.8% <sup>1</sup> |                          |                          |
|                                                                   |         | Data used    | 21A-23A                  | 21B-23B                  | 22A-24A                  | 22B-24B                  | 23A-25A                  | 23B-25B                  |                          |                          |
|                                                                   |         | RSP          |                          |                          |                          | 38.4%                    | 47.6%                    | 45.4%                    | 42.0%                    | 41.3%                    |
| Permanency in 12 months (12-23 mos)                               | 43.8% ▲ | RSP interval |                          |                          | 36.9%-41.9% <sup>2</sup> | 45.0%-50.2% <sup>2</sup> | 42.7%-48.1% <sup>2</sup> | 39.4%-44.6% <sup>2</sup> | 38.7%-43.9% <sup>2</sup> | 34.9%-39.6% <sup>2</sup> |
|                                                                   |         | Data used    |                          |                          | 23B-23A                  | 23A-23B                  | 23B-24A                  | 24A-24B                  | 24B-25A                  | 25A-25B                  |
|                                                                   |         | RSP          |                          |                          | 34.6%                    | 36.7%                    | 36.8%                    | 34.3%                    | 33.8%                    | 34.8%                    |
| Permanency in 12 months (24+ mos)                                 | 37.3% ▲ | RSP interval |                          |                          | 32.3%-36.9% <sup>2</sup> | 34.2%-39.2% <sup>2</sup> | 34.5%-39.2% <sup>2</sup> | 31.9%-36.7% <sup>2</sup> | 31.4%-36.2% <sup>2</sup> | 32.5%-37.0% <sup>2</sup> |
|                                                                   |         | Data used    |                          |                          | 23B-23A                  | 23A-23B                  | 23B-24A                  | 24A-24B                  | 24B-25A                  | 25A-25B                  |
|                                                                   |         | RSP          |                          | 5.1%                     | 5.9%                     | 6.3%                     | 7.1%                     | 6.0%                     | 4.6%                     |                          |
| Reentry to foster care                                            | 5.6% ▼  | RSP interval |                          | 4.3%-6.1% <sup>2</sup>   | 4.9%-6.9% <sup>2</sup>   | 5.4%-7.4% <sup>2</sup>   | 6.1%-8.8% <sup>2</sup>   | 5.1%-7.1% <sup>2</sup>   | 3.8%-5.5% <sup>2</sup>   |                          |
|                                                                   |         | Data used    |                          | 21B-23A                  | 22A-23B                  | 22B-24A                  | 23A-24B                  | 23B-25A                  | 24A-25B                  |                          |
|                                                                   |         | RSP          |                          |                          |                          | 6.83                     | 7.35                     | 6.83                     | 7.30                     | 6.96                     |
| Placement stability (moves/1,000 days in foster care)             | 4.48 ▼  | RSP interval |                          |                          |                          | 6.42-6.86 <sup>2</sup>   | 7.12-7.58 <sup>2</sup>   | 6.62-7.04 <sup>2</sup>   | 7.06-7.55 <sup>2</sup>   | 6.79-7.19 <sup>2</sup>   |
|                                                                   |         | Data used    |                          |                          |                          | 23B-23A                  | 23A-23B                  | 23B-24A                  | 24A-24B                  | 24B-25A                  |
|                                                                   |         | RSP          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          | 7.79                     |
| Maltreatment in care (victimizations/100,000 days in foster care) | 9.07 ▼  | RSP          | 21AB.FY21                | 22AB.FY22                | 23AB.FY23                | FY21-22                  | FY22-23                  | FY23-24                  |                          |                          |
|                                                                   |         | RSP interval | 11.61                    | 12.84                    | 6.80                     |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |
|                                                                   |         | Data used    | 21A-21B, FY21-22         | 22A-22B, FY22-23         | 23A-23B, FY23-24         |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |
| Recurrence of maltreatment                                        | 9.7% ▼  | RSP          |                          |                          |                          | 6.9%                     | 6.2%                     | 5.8%                     |                          |                          |
|                                                                   |         | RSP interval |                          |                          |                          | 6.4%-7.5% <sup>1</sup>   | 5.7%-6.7% <sup>1</sup>   | 5.4%-6.4% <sup>1</sup>   |                          |                          |
|                                                                   |         | Data used    |                          |                          |                          | FY21-22                  | FY22-23                  | FY23-24                  |                          |                          |

▲ For this indicator, a higher RSP value is desirable. ▼ For this indicator, a lower RSP value is desirable.

**Performance Key**

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- State's performance (using RSP interval) is statistically no different than national performance.
- State's performance (using RSP interval) is statistically worse than national performance.
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Source: Child and Family Service Review (CFSR 4) Data Profile, February 2026



## Observed Performance

Observed performance is the percent or rate of children experiencing the outcome of interest, without risk adjustment. See the Data Dictionary for a complete description of the numerator and denominator for each statewide data indicator.

|                                                                   |                      | 21A21B    | 21B22A    | 22A22B    | 22B21A  | 23A21B  | 23B24A  | 24A24B  | 24B25A  | 25A25B  |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Permanency in 12 months (entries)                                 | Denominator          | 3,328     | 3,263     | 3,203     | 3,285   | 3,540   | 3,273   |         |         |         |
|                                                                   | Numerator            | 1,466     | 1,404     | 1,337     | 1,394   | 1,519   | 1,399   |         |         |         |
|                                                                   | Observed performance | 44.1%     | 43.0%     | 41.7%     | 42.4%   | 42.9%   | 42.7%   |         |         |         |
| Permanency in 12 months (12-23 mos)                               | Denominator          |           |           |           | 1,358   | 1,338   | 1,270   | 1,288   | 1,341   | 1,572   |
|                                                                   | Numerator            |           |           |           | 523     | 638     | 577     | 539     | 548     | 574     |
|                                                                   | Observed performance |           |           |           | 39.2%   | 47.7%   | 45.4%   | 41.8%   | 40.9%   | 36.5%   |
| Permanency in 12 months (24+ mos)                                 | Denominator          |           |           |           | 1,500   | 1,273   | 1,348   | 1,282   | 1,300   | 1,457   |
|                                                                   | Numerator            |           |           |           | 511     | 460     | 509     | 448     | 448     | 520     |
|                                                                   | Observed performance |           |           |           | 34.1%   | 36.1%   | 37.8%   | 34.9%   | 34.5%   | 35.7%   |
| Reentry to foster care                                            | Denominator          |           | 2,425     | 2,158     | 2,112   | 2,264   | 2,262   | 2,274   |         |         |
|                                                                   | Numerator            |           | 116       | 120       | 127     | 154     | 127     | 95      |         |         |
|                                                                   | Observed performance |           | 4.8%      | 5.6%      | 6.0%    | 6.8%    | 5.6%    | 4.2%    |         |         |
| Placement stability (moves/1,000 days in foster care)             | Denominator          |           |           |           | 503,490 | 530,324 | 556,957 | 462,493 | 515,383 | 466,254 |
|                                                                   | Numerator            |           |           |           | 3,408   | 3,998   | 3,897   | 3,474   | 3,650   | 3,712   |
|                                                                   | Observed performance |           |           |           | 6.77    | 7.54    | 7.00    | 7.51    | 7.08    | 7.96    |
|                                                                   |                      | 21ABJY21  | 22ABJY22  | 23ABJY23  | FY21-22 | FY22-23 | FY23-24 |         |         |         |
| Maltreatment in care (victimizations/100,000 days in foster care) | Denominator          | 1,979,764 | 1,859,283 | 1,910,507 |         |         |         |         |         |         |
|                                                                   | Numerator            | 174       | 181       | 96        |         |         |         |         |         |         |
|                                                                   | Observed performance | 8.79      | 9.73      | 5.02      |         |         |         |         |         |         |
| Recurrence of maltreatment                                        | Denominator          |           |           |           | 11,995  | 11,777  | 11,062  |         |         |         |
|                                                                   | Numerator            |           |           |           | 623     | 543     | 480     |         |         |         |
|                                                                   | Observed performance |           |           |           | 5.2%    | 4.6%    | 4.3%    |         |         |         |

DQ = Performance was not calculated due to the state exceeding the data quality limit on one or more data quality (DQ) checks done for the indicator, or missing AFCARS and/or NCANDS submission(s). Exceeding a limit on a DQ check for an AFCARS and/or NCANDS submission(s) will result in performance not being calculated on the associated indicator(s) that require the affected submission(s) to calculate performance. A DQ flag will likely affect multiple measurement periods. See the data quality table for details.

DQ\* = Performance was not calculated due to data quality issues beyond the DQ checks.

Denominator: For Placement stability and Maltreatment in care = number of days in care. For all other indicators = number of children.

Numerator: For Placement stability = number of moves. For Maltreatment in care = number of victimizations. For all other indicators = number of children.

Percentage or rate: For Placement stability = moves per 1,000 days in foster care. For Maltreatment in care = victimizations per 100,000 days in foster care. For all other indicators = percentage of children experiencing the outcome.

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Source: Child and Family Service Review (CFSR 4) Data Profile, February 2026

## SECTION 4: Case Review Findings

### Case Review Findings and Analysis

Findings from Alabama's QA/CQI case review process provide qualitative context to statewide data indicators and further explain observed performance trends across safety, permanency, well-being, and systemic factors.

Across review periods, case review results consistently indicate that while certain areas of practice demonstrate relative strength, performance is not sustained at levels required for substantial conformity. These findings align with statewide data indicators and reflect broader system-level challenges affecting case progression, service delivery, and placement disruption and stability.

| Performance Item or Outcome<br>Timeframe for Reviews                                                              | Performance Item Strength/Outcome Substantial Achievement Ratings |                       |                      | Overall Determination         |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------|
|                                                                                                                   | Oct. 2024-March 2025                                              | April 2025-Sept. 2025 | Oct. 2025-March 2026 |                               |
| <b>Safety Outcome 1</b><br>Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect.                    | 86%                                                               | 96%                   | 88%                  | Not in Substantial Conformity |
| <b>Item 1</b><br>Timeliness of Investigations                                                                     | 86%                                                               | 96%                   | 88%                  | Area Needing Improvement      |
| <b>Safety Outcome 2</b><br>Children are maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate.              | 67%                                                               | 60%                   | 76%                  | Not in Substantial Conformity |
| <b>Item 2</b><br>Services to protect <u>child(ren)</u> in the home and prevent removal or re-entry to foster care | 75%                                                               | 53%                   | 69%                  | Area Needing Improvement      |
| <b>Item 3</b><br>Risk and Safety Assessment and Management                                                        | 68%                                                               | 63%                   | 79%                  | Area Needing Improvement      |

Source: Child and Family Services Review (CFSR 4) Data Profile Supplemental Context Data, February 2026

| Performance Item or Outcome<br>Timeframe for Reviews                                                             | Performance Item Strength/Outcome Substantial Achievement Ratings |                       |                      | Overall Determination         |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------|
|                                                                                                                  | Oct. 2024-March 2025                                              | April 2025-Sept. 2025 | Oct. 2025-March 2026 |                               |
| <b>Permanency Outcome 1</b><br>Children have permanency and stability in their living situations.                | 12%                                                               | 21%                   | 26%                  | Not in Substantial Conformity |
| <b>Item 4</b><br>Stability of Foster Care Placement                                                              | 83%                                                               | 81%                   | 79%                  | Area Needing Improvement      |
| <b>Item 5</b><br>Permanency Goal for Child                                                                       | 36%                                                               | 45%                   | 48%                  | Area Needing Improvement      |
| <b>Item 6</b><br>Achieving Reunification, Guardianship, Adoption or Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement | 31%                                                               | 31%                   | 33%                  | Area Needing Improvement      |

Source: Child and Family Services Review (CFSR 4) Data Profile Supplemental Context Data, February 2026

| Performance Item or Outcome                                                                                      | Performance Item Strength/Outcome Substantial Achievement Ratings |                       |                      | Overall Determination         |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------|
|                                                                                                                  | Oct. 2024-March 2025                                              | April 2025-Sept. 2025 | Oct. 2025-March 2026 |                               |
| <b>Permanency Outcome 2</b><br>The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children. | 64%                                                               | 52%                   | 55%                  | Not in Substantial Conformity |
| <b>Item 7</b><br>Placement with Siblings                                                                         | 89%                                                               | 80%                   | 63%                  | Area Needing Improvement      |
| <b>Item 8</b><br>Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care                                               | 63%                                                               | 59%                   | 53%                  | Area Needing Improvement      |
| <b>Item 9</b><br>Preserving Connections                                                                          | 67%                                                               | 57%                   | 64%                  | Area Needing Improvement      |
| <b>Item 10</b><br>Relative Placement                                                                             | 72%                                                               | 68%                   | 72%                  | Area Needing Improvement      |
| <b>Item 11</b><br>Relationship of child in care with parents                                                     | 52%                                                               | 30%                   | 43%                  | Area Needing Improvement      |

Source: Child and Family Services Review (CFSR 4) Data Profile Supplemental Context Data, February 2026

| Performance Item or Outcome                                                                           | Performance Item Strength/Outcome Substantial Achievement Ratings |                       |                      | Overall Determination         |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------|
|                                                                                                       | Oct. 2024-March 2025                                              | April 2025-Sept. 2025 | Oct. 2025-March 2026 |                               |
| <b>Well-Being Outcome 1</b><br>Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs. | 31%                                                               | 24%                   | 36%                  | Not in Substantial Conformity |
| <b>Item 12</b><br>Needs and services of child, parents, and foster parents                            | 32%                                                               | 27%                   | 41%                  | Area Needing Improvement      |
| <b>Sub-Item 12A</b><br>Needs assessment and services to children                                      | 77%                                                               | 64%                   | 83%                  | Area Needing Improvement      |
| <b>Sub-Item 12B</b><br>Needs assessment and services to parents                                       | 25%                                                               | 25%                   | 38%                  | Area Needing Improvement      |
| <b>Sub-Item 12C</b><br>Needs assessment and services to foster parents                                | 88%                                                               | 76%                   | 70%                  | Area Needing Improvement      |
| <b>Item 13</b><br>Relationship of child in care with parents                                          | 51%                                                               | 38%                   | 51%                  | Area Needing Improvement      |
| <b>Item 14</b><br>Caseworker visits with child                                                        | 81%                                                               | 77%                   | 88%                  | Area Needing Improvement      |
| <b>Item 15</b><br>Caseworker visits with parents                                                      | 33%                                                               | 27%                   | 50%                  | Area Needing Improvement      |

Source: Child and Family Services Review (CFSR 4) Data Profile Supplemental Context Data, February 2026

| Performance Item or Outcome                                                                                      | Performance Item Strength/Outcome Substantial Achievement Ratings |                       |                      | Overall Determination         |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------|
| Timeframe for Reviews                                                                                            | Oct. 2024-March 2025                                              | April 2025-Sept. 2025 | Oct. 2025-March 2026 |                               |
| <b>Well-being Outcome 2</b><br>Children receive adequate services to meet their educational needs                | 95%                                                               | 85%                   | 86%                  | Not in Substantial Conformity |
| <b>Item 16</b><br>Educational needs of the child                                                                 | 95%                                                               | 85%                   | 86%                  | Area Needing Improvement      |
| <b>Well-being Outcome 3</b><br>Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs | 71%                                                               | 53%                   | 52%                  | Not in Substantial Conformity |
| <b>Item 17</b><br>Physical health of the child                                                                   | 77%                                                               | 68%                   | 64%                  | Area Needing Improvement      |
| <b>Item 18</b><br>Mental/behavioral health of the child                                                          | 61%                                                               | 44%                   | 44%                  | Area Needing Improvement      |

Source: Child and Family Services Review (CFSR 4) Data Profile Supplemental Context Data, February 2026

### Overall Case Review Summary

Across all review periods, case review findings demonstrate that Alabama's performance challenges are not isolated to individual cases or single practice areas. Rather, findings reflect interconnected system-level factors influencing performance across outcomes, particularly related to:

- Timely permanency for children with extended lengths of stay
- Placement disruption and stability
- Service availability and coordination
- Engagement of parents, caregivers, and kinship supports
- Consistency in case practice across regions

These findings align with statewide data indicators and directly support the State's identification of permanency and placement disruption as primary areas requiring improvement.

### Systemic Factors

Alabama's statewide assessment included evaluation of all seven federal systemic factors. Based on this assessment, the following systemic factors were determined to be not in substantial conformity:

**Determinations:**

- Statewide Information System: Not in Substantial Conformity
- Case Review System: Not in Substantial Conformity
- Quality Assurance System: Not in Substantial Conformity
- Staff and Provider Training: Not in Substantial Conformity
- Service Array and Resource Development: Not in Substantial Conformity
- Agency Responsiveness to the Community: Not in Substantial Conformity
- Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention: Not in Substantial Conformity

Alabama maintains established statewide operational, QA/CQI, training, and information system structures, including a statewide Comprehensive Child Welfare Information System (CCWIS) through FACTS (Family, Adult, Child Tracking System), which supports case management, placement tracking, demographic reporting, permanency monitoring, and quality assurance activities across all regions of the state. Findings identified gaps in consistency of implementation, service availability, placement capacity, data accessibility, and alignment between policy and practice.

**Summary of Determinations**

Based on the integration of statewide data indicators and QA/CQI case review findings, Alabama has identified areas not in substantial conformity across safety, permanency, and well-being outcomes and across multiple systemic factors.

These determinations are most strongly reflected in challenges related to timely permanency for children with extended lengths of stay and placement disruption and stability, which serve as the primary focus of the State's Program Improvement Plan.

**SECTION 5: Stakeholder Engagement Summary****Stakeholder Engagement Summary**

As part of the statewide assessment, Alabama engaged a broad range of internal and external stakeholders to inform evaluation of outcomes, systemic factors, and overall system performance, consistent with federal expectations under 45 C.F.R. § 1355.33.

Stakeholder engagement was used to supplement statewide data indicators and QA/CQI case review findings by providing qualitative input on case practice, service delivery, system strengths, and areas requiring improvement.

**Stakeholder Participation**

Stakeholders engaged in the statewide assessment process included:

- State leadership and program administrators

- Quality Assurance and Continuous Quality Improvement staff
- County and regional child welfare staff, including supervisors and caseworkers
- Court representatives and legal partners
- Foster parents, kinship caregivers, and adoptive parents
- Youth and young adults with lived experience in foster care
- Service providers and community partners

Alabama's statewide assessment process incorporated broad cross-system participation from leadership, frontline staff, courts, caregivers, youth, and community stakeholders to support evaluation of statewide performance and system functioning.

### **Engagement Methods**

Alabama utilized multiple methods to gather stakeholder input, including:

- Structured focus groups conducted across regions
- Surveys of internal staff and external stakeholders
- Meetings with court and legal partners
- Direct input from youth, foster parents, and kinship caregivers
- Internal workgroups and cross-divisional planning teams

These methods ensured representation across stakeholder groups and provided both system-level and case-level perspectives.

### **Integration of Stakeholder Input**

Stakeholder feedback was reviewed in conjunction with statewide data indicators and QA/CQI case review findings to identify consistent themes and system-level challenges.

Stakeholder input reinforced key findings identified through data and case reviews, including:

- Delays in achieving timely permanency for children with extended lengths of stay
- Challenges related to placement availability, matching, disruption, and stability
- Variability in service access and coordination across regions
- Barriers to effective engagement with parents, caregivers, and kinship supports
- System constraints related to workforce capacity, training, and resource availability

Stakeholder input also highlighted system strengths, including strong commitment from frontline staff, established QA/CQI processes, and ongoing efforts to expand placement capacity and improve service delivery.

### **Summary**

Stakeholder engagement findings were consistent with statewide data indicators and QA/CQI case review results and were used to inform Alabama's assessment of performance and identification of areas not in substantial conformity.

**These findings support the conclusion that performance challenges are driven by interconnected system-level factors and require coordinated, system-level strategies focused on improving timely permanency and reducing placement disruption, as reflected in Alabama's Program Improvement Plan.**