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SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

Illinois Child Endangerment Risk Assessment Protocol
FY2015 Annual Evaluation

Yu-Ling Chiu, Ph.D.
Martin Nieto, M.A.
Satomi Wakita, Ph.D.
Tamara L. Fuller, Ph.D.

Children and Family Research Center
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Prepared for:

Illinois Department of Children and Family Services
George H. Sheldon, Acting Director

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Illinois Child Endangerment Risk Assessment Protocol
FY2015 Evaluation

1. Introduction and Purpose

The Child Endangerment Risk Assessment Protocol (CERAP) is a safety assessment protocol used in child protection investigations and child welfare services in Illinois. This "life-of-the case" protocol is designed to provide workers with a mechanism for quickly assessing the potential for moderate to severe harm to a child in the immediate or near future and for taking quick action to protect children. Workers utilize the protocol at specified milestones throughout the life of an investigation or child welfare case to help focus their decision-making to determine whether a child is safe or unsafe, and if unsafe, decide what actions must be taken to assure their safety. When immediate risk to a child's safety is identified, the protocol requires that action be taken, such as the implementation of a safety plan or protective custody.

At the request of the CERAP advisory committee, the current report examines CERAP assessment during placement cases (i.e., families with children in out-of-home placements). In May 2013, the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) revised the CERAP procedures as part of the implementation of an Enhanced Safety Model. According to the procedures, DCFS and POS staff are required to use the CERAP at specified time frames, referred to as "milestones," and at any other time when the worker believes that a child may be unsafe. For *placement cases with a reunification goal*, CERAP assessments must be completed at the following case milestones:

1. Within 5 working days after a worker receives a new or transferred case, when there are other children in the home of origin.
2. Every 90 calendar days from the case opening date.[1]
3. When considering the commencement of unsupervised visits in the home of the parent or guardian.
4. Within 24 hours prior to returning a child home.
5. When a new child is added to a family with a child in care.
6. Within 5 working days after a child is returned home and every month thereafter until the family case is closed.
7. Whenever evidence or circumstances suggest that a child's safety may be in jeopardy.

According to the Procedures 300 Appendix G and Procedures 315 Appendix A, the CERAP must be conducted "considering children's safety as if they are to be returned to the caregivers from whom they were removed." The worker needs to assess the observable home environment and the presence of anyone in the home who might be considered a safety threat to the child if he/she is to return home that day.

[1] In the previous version of the CERAP, this milestone was "every 6 months from the case opening date."

The CERAP Advisory Committee was interested in understanding worker use of the CERAP among placement cases and developed the following research questions:

1. What is the compliance rate of CERAP assessment at each of the following milestones for placement cases:[2]
   - Within 5 working days after a worker receives a new or transferred case, when there are other children in the home of origin?
   - Every 90 calendar days from the case opening date?
   - Within 24 hours prior to return a child home?
   - Within 5 working days after a child is returned home and every month thereafter until the family case is closed?

2. Do compliance rates vary by region?

3. What is the relationship between the safety decision of the CERAP completed every 90 calendar days from the case opening date and reunification date?

2. Sample

According to CERAP procedures, the CERAP is a *familial* assessment, used to assess the safety of the home of origin. Therefore, the unit of analysis for the analyses in this report is the family. Families were included in the sample if they 1) had at least one child in substitute care and 2) had a permanency goal of reunification/return home.

3. Analyses and Results

The following terms are used in the analyses and results sections:

- Opened family cases: Families that receive any service from DCFS, including intact cases and placement cases.
- Intact family cases: opened family cases that receive in-home services.
- Placement cases: opened family cases that have at least one child in substitute care with a permanency goal of reunification.
- Reunification cases: placement cases that have at least one child return home.
- Yearly entry cohort: placement cases opened in that fiscal year with at least one child in placement with a reunification goal at any time while the family case was open.

[2] Compliance with the other placement case milestones (when considering the commencement of unsupervised visits in the home of the parent or guardian; when a new child is added to a family; and whenever evidence or circumstances suggest that a child's safety may be in jeopardy) could not be assessed using administrative data only, and are therefore not examined in this report.

3.1 CERAP milestone compliance

For each milestone, compliance is calculated by showing the percentages of family cases in each yearly entry cohort that had a CERAP assessment completed within the required timeline. Compliance rates are further refined by looking at them in several different ways:

(1) The percentage of cases in which a CERAP was completed within the required timeframe for that milestone (or within a short "grace period" following the milestone);

(2) The percentage of cases in which a CERAP was completed but not within the required timeframe;

(3) The percentage of cases that had no CERAP completed for that milestone.

The number of family cases opened each year is shown in Table 1.[3] As can be seen, the total number of family cases has decreased over the past 10 years, as has the number of placement cases.

Table 1. Family cases by case type (FY 2005-2014)

Entry cohort	Total Family cases	Family without any child in placement (Intact cases)	Family with child(ren) in placement (Placement cases)
2005	10,028	6,518 (65.0%)	3,510 (35.0%)
2006	9,038	5,838 (64.6%)	3,200 (35.4%)
2007	8,738	5,500 (62.9%)	3,238 (37.1%)
2008	8,923	5,398 (60.5%)	3,525 (39.5%)
2009	8,875	5,509 (62.1%)	3,366 (37.9%)
2010	8,479	5,133 (60.5%)	3,346 (39.5%)
2011	9,226	5,951 (64.5%)	3,275 (35.5%)
2012	9,789	6,612 (67.6%)	3,177 (32.4%)
2013	6,935	3,991 (57.6%)	2,944 (42.4%)
2014	7,877	5,013 (63.6%)	2,864 (36.4%)

[3] A family might have more than one child in substitute care during any time when the family case is still opened.

Milestone 1: A CERAP should be completed within 5 working days after a worker receives a new or transferred case, when there are other children in the home of origin.

To examine the CERAP completion rates at this milestone, several steps were taken. First, of the placement cases opened each year, the number with other child(ren) at home was identified (Table 2, Column 4).

Table 2. Placement cases with children remaining at home

Entry cohort	Placement cases	Did not have other children at home	Have other children at home
2005	3,510	1,589 (45.3%)	1,921 (54.7%)
2006	3,200	1,444 (45.1%)	1,756 (54.9%)
2007	3,238	1,466 (45.3%)	1,772 (54.7%)
2008	3,525	1,742 (49.4%)	1,783 (50.6%)
2009	3,366	1,683 (50.0%)	1,683 (50.0%)
2010	3,346	1,745 (52.1%)	1,601 (47.8%)
2011	3,275	1,694 (51.7%)	1,581 (48.3%)
2012	3,177	1,603 (50.5%)	1,574 (49.5%)
2013	2,944	1,693 (57.5%)	1,251 (42.5%)
2014	2,864	1,608 (56.2%)	1,256 (43.8%)

Next, the permanency goals for the children in these placement cases were examined, so that children with a permanency goal other than reunification could be excluded (see Table 3). Information about children's permanency goals was missing for over half of the children in each entry cohort. For those children that had a permanency goal, it was almost always reunification – around 5% each year had a permanency goal other than reunification when they entered care. In order to keep as many children in the sample for the compliance analysis, we included both children who had a permanency goal of reunification as well as those that did not have any permanency goal included in the administrative data. Children with a permanency goal other than reunification were excluded.

Table 3. Permanency goals for placement cases

Entry cohort	Have other children at home	Other permanency goal	Reunification permanency goal	Missing permanency goal
2005	1,921	97 (5.0%)	749 (39.0%)	1,075 (56.0%)
2006	1,756	84 (4.8%)	652 (37.1%)	1,020 (58.1%)
2007	1,772	99 (5.6%)	678 (38.3%)	995 (56.1%)
2008	1,783	96 (5.4%)	759 (42.6%)	928 (52.0%)
2009	1,683	86 (5.1%)	726 (43.1%)	871 (51.8%)
2010	1,601	109 (6.8%)	714 (44.6%)	778 (48.6%)
2011	1,581	121 (7.6%)	646 (40.9%)	814 (51.5%)
2012	1,574	87 (5.5%)	651 (41.4%)	836 (53.1%)
2013	1,251	76 (6.1%)	584 (46.7%)	591 (47.2%)
2014	1,256	62 (5.0%)	495 (39.4%)	699 (55.6%)

According to Procedures 300, the CERAP should be completed "within 5 *working* days after a worker receives a new or transferred case." For the compliance analyses, we changed *5 working days* to *10 calendar days* in order to account for weekends and holidays. Table 4 shows the percentage of cases that had a CERAP completed: 1) within 10 calendar days of the case opening date; 2) within 11-60 days; 3) within 61 or more days; and 4) those with no CERAP completed for this milestone.

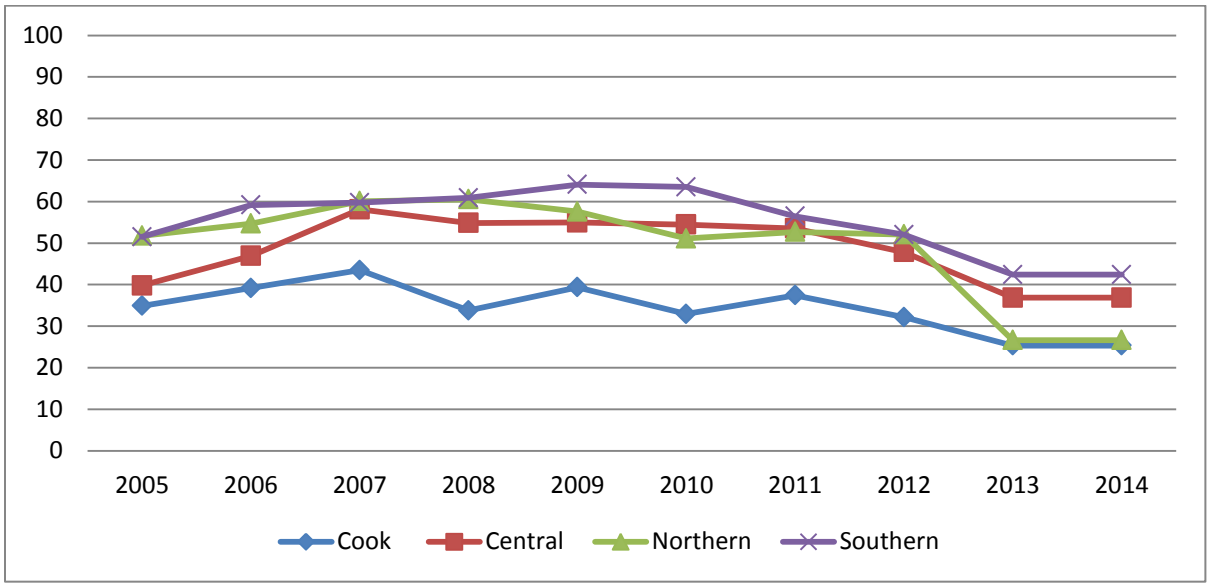
Table 4. CERAP compliance for Milestone 1

Entry cohort	Cases with a reunification goal	Had CERAP within 10 days	Had CERAP in 11-60 days	Had CERAP in 61 days or more	No CERAP
2005	1,824	747 (41.0%)	45 (2.5%)	119 (6.5%)	913 (50.0%)
2006	1,672	785 (47.0%)	64 (3.8%)	103 (6.2%)	720 (43.1%)
2007	1,673	888 (53.1%)	82 (4.9%)	113 (6.7%)	590 (35.3%)
2008	1,687	817 (48.4%)	106 (6.3%)	126 (7.5%)	638 (37.8%)
2009	1,597	816 (51.1%)	110 (6.9%)	128 (8.0%)	543 (34.0%)
2010	1,492	702 (47.0%)	121 (8.1%)	137 (9.2%)	532 (35.7%)
2011	1,460	696 (47.7%)	122 (8.4%)	121 (8.3%)	521 (35.7%)
2012	1,487	641 (43.1%)	64 (4.3%)	194 (13.0%)	588 (39.5%)
2013	1,175	366 (31.2%)	101 (8.6%)	252 (21.5%)	456 (38.8%)
2014	1,194	391 (32.8%)	131 (11.0%)	191 (16.0%)	481 (40.3%)

Between 30-50% of the placement cases in each entry cohort over the past ten years had a CERAP completed within 10 calendar days of their case opening date. The compliance rate has dropped in recent years – from nearly 48% in FY2011 to 33% in FY2014. However, the percentage of cases that had a CERAP completed two months or more after the case opening date has increased in the past several years. Around 40% of the placement cases opened in FY2014 did not have a CERAP completed for this milestone at any time.

Figure 1 displays CERAP compliance for this milestone by DCFS region (Cook, Northern, Central, and Southern) for the placement entry cohorts in fiscal years 2005 – 2014 (see also, Appendix Table 13). Compliance rates are lowest in the Cook region over the entire time period. CERAP compliance at this milestone has been decreasing in all regions over the past three years, with the largest declines occurring in the Northern region.

Figure 1. Regional CERAP compliance with Milestone 1



Milestone 2: A CERAP should be completed every 90 calendar days from the case opening date.

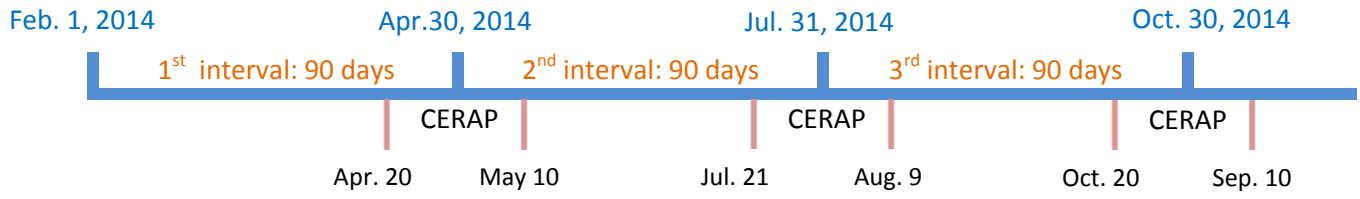
In May 2013, the requirement for ongoing CERAP assessment in placement cases was changed from every 6 months to every 90 days. Examination of compliance rates over time therefore had to take into account when the case was opened. For all cases, the starting point for calculating compliance was the date the child went into substitute care; if more than one child from a family went into substitute care, it was the date the first child went into substitute care. The next step was to calculate each 6 month or 90 day interval after the placement case opening date for each family that had at least one child with a reunification permanency goal. The first interval refers to the initial 90 days/6 months after the placement case opening date, the second interval is the subsequent 90 days /6 months, and so on. Compliance with this milestone was assessed by examining whether or not a case had a CERAP completed within the 10 days prior to or following the 90 day/6 month interval date.

Several examples are discussed to illustrate. The first example shows a placement case that opened on January 1, 2005. At that time, a CERAP assessment should have been conducted every 6 months. Therefore, the first interval for Case A would be from January 1 to June 30 2005. CERAP compliance was assessed by examining whether a CERAP was completed between June 20 and July 10 2005. The same procedure was applied to each interval.

- **Placement Case A**: opened on Jan. 1, 2005

Case B opened on February 1, 2014, and therefore required a CERAP every 90 days. Compliance was measured by examining whether a CERAP was completed between April 20 and May 10 (2014).

- **Placement Case B**: opened on Feb. 1, 2014



Some cases opened before May 2013 and remain opened afterwards, meaning that compliance was measured at 6 month intervals prior to May 2013 and at 90 day intervals after May 2013.

- **Placement Case C**: opened on Nov. 1, 2012

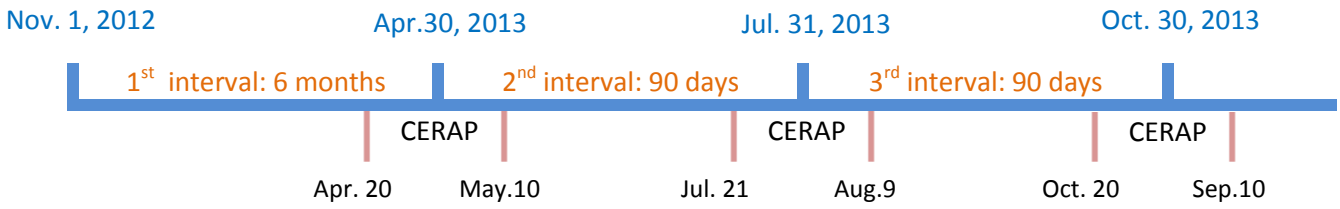


Table 5 shows the compliance rates for the first three intervals after case opening for the 2005-2014 entry cohorts. In order to interpret the findings, we can use the 2005 entry cohort as an example. There were 3,145 placement cases that had a reunification goal and the case remained opened at least 6 months in the 2005 entry cohort. Of these cases, 24.4% had a CERAP completed at the first 6 month interval after the case opening date. Among the cases in the 2005 entry cohort that remained open at 12 months after case opening and still had a permanency goal of reunification (n=2,976), 26.7% had a CERAP completed at their 2nd interval. Of those that remained open at 18 months after case opening and still had a permanency goal of reunification, around 29% had a competed CERAP assessment at the third interval. The results in Table 5 and Figure 2 show that in general, the overall CERAP compliance at this milestone is low and has decreased over time.

Table 5. CERAP completion for Milestone 2

Entry cohort	1st Interval (6 months/90 days)		2nd Interval (6 months/90 days)		3rd Interval (6 months/90 days)	
	N	CERAP	N	CERAP	N	CERAP
2005	3,145	767 (24.4%)	2,976	793 (26.7%)	2,708	780 (28.8%)
2006	2,902	653 (22.5%)	2,740	669 (24.4%)	2,494	646 (25.9%)
2007	2,932	555 (18.9%)	2,751	580 (21.1%)	2,473	565 (22.9%)
2008	3,175	601 (18.9%)	2,949	591 (20.0%)	2,638	589 (22.3%)
2009	3,012	565 (18.8%)	2,809	557 (19.8%)	2,506	532 (21.2%)
2010	3,005	554 (18.4%)	2,812	556 (19.8%)	2,491	530 (21.3%)
2011	2,903	480 (16.5%)	2,674	448 (16.8%)	2,364	423 (17.9%)
2012	2,789	466 (16.7%)	2,571	433 (16.8%)	2,247	381 (17.0%)
2013	2,568	320 (12.5%)	2,384	418 (17.5%)	2,126	369 (17.4%)
2014	2,628	359 (13.7%)	2,562	568 (22.2%)	2,490	396 (15.9%)

Figure 2 CERAP completion for Milestone 2

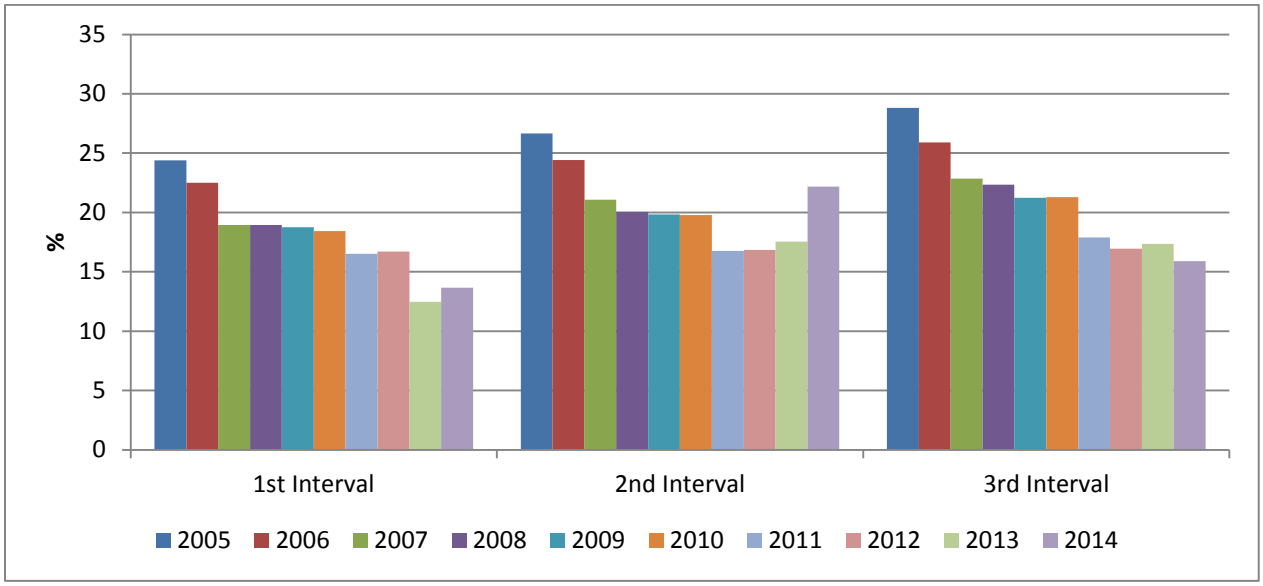
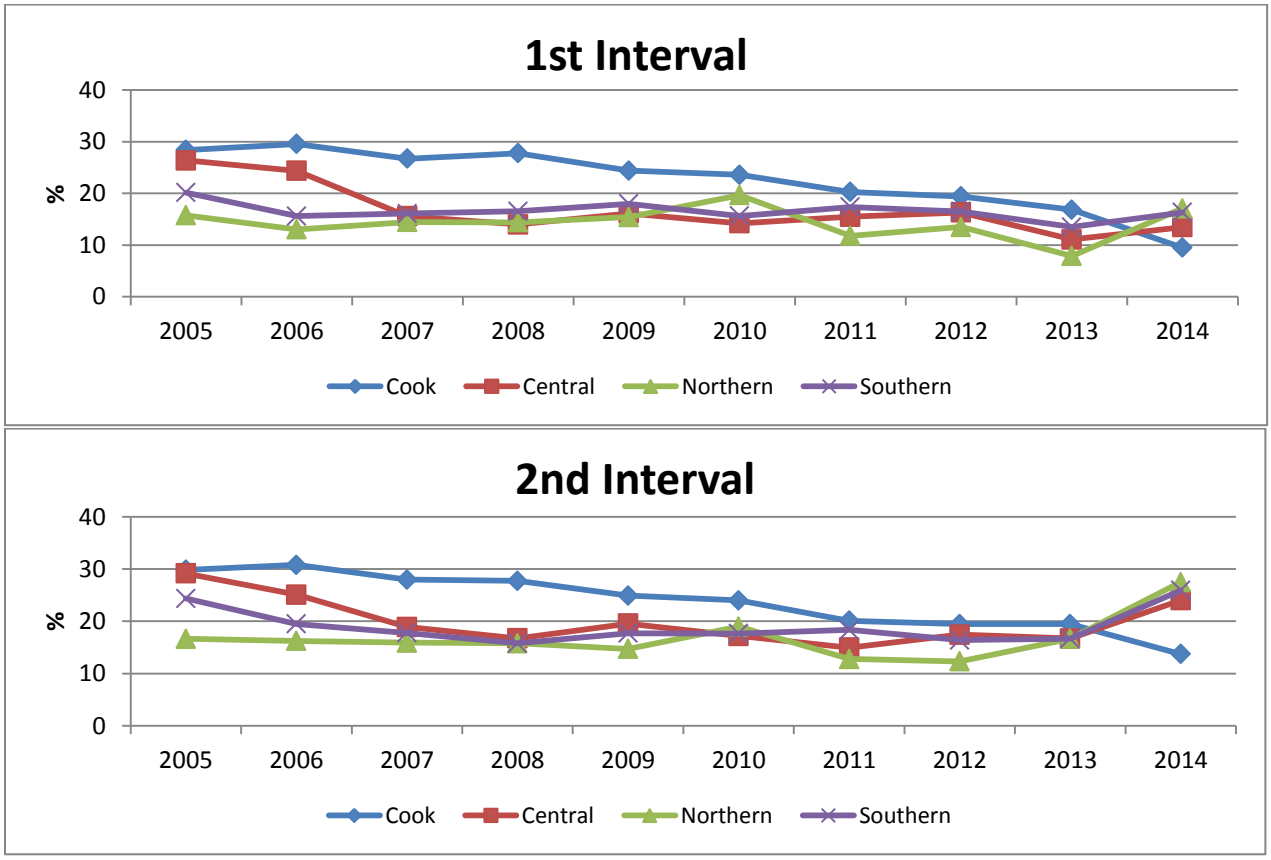
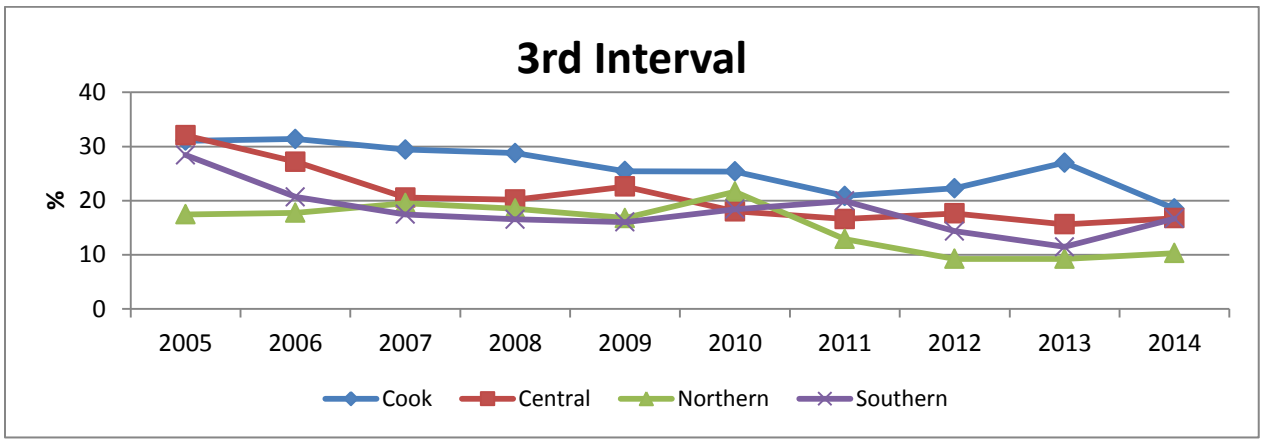


Figure 3 shows the regional patterns of CERAP completion for Milestone 2 at the first, second, and third intervals (see also Appendix Table 14).

Figure 3 Percentages of CERAP completion every 6 months/90 days by region





Milestone 4: Within 24 hours prior to returning a child home.

According to CERAP procedures, a safety assessment must be completed within 24 hours prior to returning a child home. In order to examine compliance with this milestone, the number of placement cases in each entry cohort that had any child return home at any point after the placement case open date is shown in Table 6. For most entry cohorts, around 33%-42% had at least one child returned home, although the rate is lower for the FY2014 entry cohort (17.4%) because those cases have not been opened as long and had a shorter observation period.

Table 6. Placement cases with at least one child returned home

Entry cohort	Placement cases	Did not have any child return home	Had at least one child return home (Reunification cases)
2005	3,510	2,184 (62.2%)	1,326 (37.8%)
2006	3,200	2,060 (64.4%)	1,140 (35.6%)
2007	3,238	2,042 (63.1%)	1,196 (36.9%)
2008	3,525	2,103 59.7%)	1,422 (40.3%)
2009	3,366	1,959 (58.2%)	1,407 (41.8%)
2010	3,346	2,009 (60.0%)	1,337 (40.0%)
2011	3,275	2,012 (61.4%)	1,263 (38.6%)
2012	3,177	2,046 (64.4%)	1,131 (35.6%)
2013	2,944	1,965 (66.7%)	979 (33.3%)
2014	2,864	2,365 (82.6%)	499 (17.4%)

Using the cases with at least one child returned home as the population, Table 7 and Figure 4 show the number and percentage of families that had a CERAP completed within 2 days prior to the return home date, more than 2 days prior to the return home date, and those without a CERAP assessment when the child(ren) returned home. In recent years, about 30% of cases had a CERAP within 2 days prior to reunification and more than half had no CERAP assessment for this milestone.

Table 7. CERAP compliance with Milestone 4

Entry cohort	Reunification cases	Had CERAP within 2 days prior to reunification	Had CERAP more than 2 days prior to reunification	No CERAP prior to reunification
2005	1,326	185 (14.0%)	411 (31.0%)	730 (55.0%)
2006	1,140	226 (19.8%)	402 (35.3%)	512 (44.9%)
2007	1,196	286 (23.9%)	411 (34.4%)	499 (41.7%)
2008	1,422	366 (25.7%)	450 (31.7%)	606 (42.6%)
2009	1,407	403 (28.6%)	462 (32.9%)	542 (38.5%)
2010	1,337	407 (30.4%)	432 (32.3%)	498 (37.3%)
2011	1,263	402 (31.8%)	378 (30.0%)	483 (38.2%)
2012	1,131	347 (30.7%)	256 (22.6%)	528 (46.7%)
2013	979	296 (30.2%)	190 (19.4%)	493 (50.4%)
2014	499	127 (25.5%)	90 (18.0%)	282 (56.5%)

Figure 4. CERAP compliance with Milestone 4

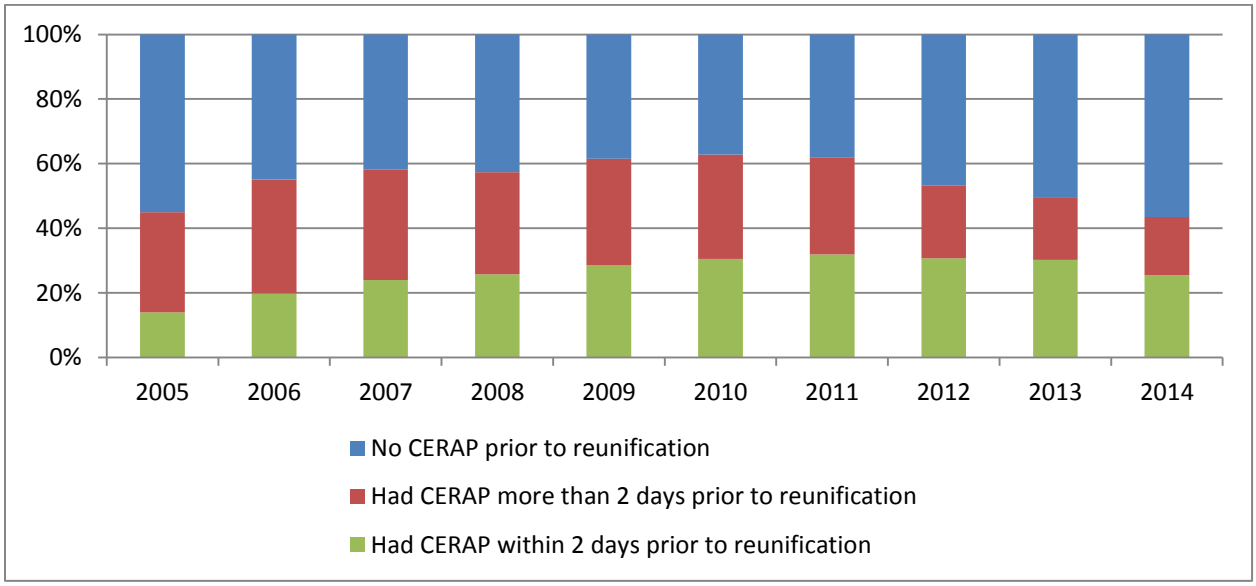
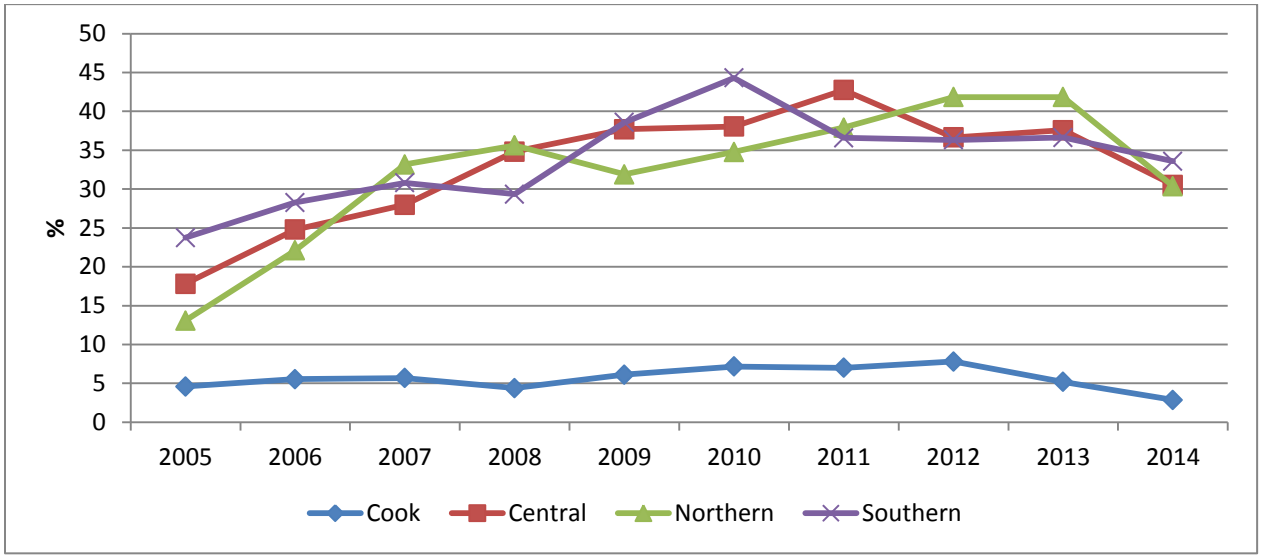


Figure 5 shows the regional CERAP completion rates (within 2 days prior to return home) for this milestone (see also Appendix Table 15). Completion rates in the Cook region are much lower than in the other regions (less than 8% in most years). Completion rates in the Central, Northern, and Southern regions have been generally increasing in recent years, although rates in the most recent year (FY2014) have dropped.

Figure 5. Regional CERAP completion for Milestone 4



Milestone 6: Within 5 working days after a child is returned home and every month thereafter until the family case is closed.

The sample used for this analysis is the same as the one used for Milestone 4, that is, placement cases in which at least one child was returned home. Two analyses were completed to examine completion with this milestone. First, the CERAP compliance within 5 working days represents the percentages of reunification cases that had a CERAP assessment within 10 calendar days after the reunification date (in order to allow for weekends and holidays). Second, the monthly CERAP compliance rates after reunification until cases closed were examined by comparing the number of months between reunification and case closing for each entry cohort with the numbers of completed CERAP assessments during the same time. This analysis only included the reunification cases that had at least one CERAP after the reunification.

(1) Within 5 working days after a child is returned home

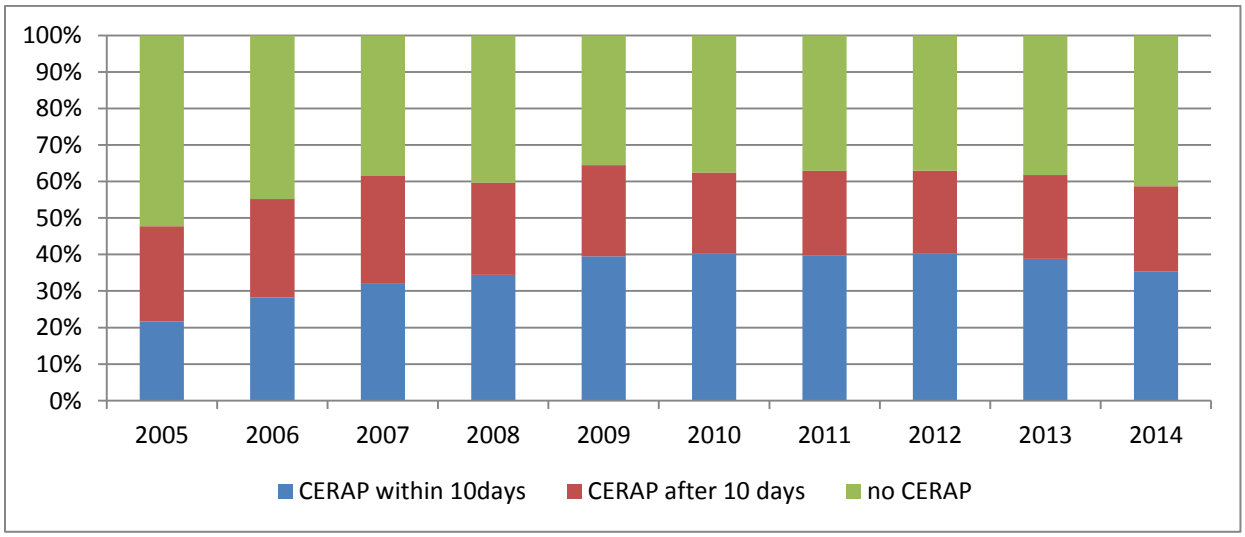
Table 8 and Figure 6 show the number and percentage of placement cases with a CERAP within 10 days after the reunification date, more than 10 days after the reunification date, and those with no CERAP assessment after reunification. In general, CERAP completion for this milestone has been improving over time – between 35-40% of cases in recent years have had CERAP

within 10 days of reunification. Still, around 40% of cases had no CERAP completed after the child was returned home.

Table 8. CERAP completion within 5 working days after a child is returned home

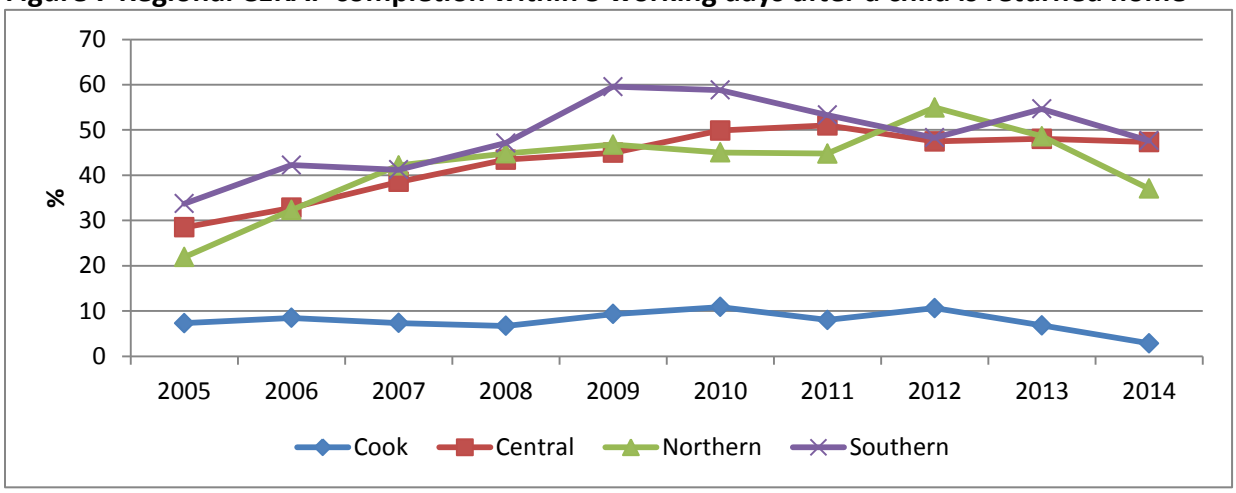
Entry cohort	Reunification cases	Had CERAP within 10 days after reunification	Had CERAP more than 10 days after reunification	No CERAP after reunification
2005	1,326	287 (21.7%)	346 (26.1%)	693 (52.3%)
2006	1,140	321 (28.2%)	308 (27.0%)	511 (44.8%)
2007	1,196	382 (31.9%)	353 (29.5%)	461 (38.6%)
2008	1,422	490 (34.5%)	358 (25.2%)	574 (40.4%)
2009	1,407	556 (39.5%)	351 (25.0%)	500 (35.5%)
2010	1,337	539 (40.3%)	296 (22.1%)	502 (37.6%)
2011	1,263	502 (39.8%)	292 (23.1%)	469 (37.1%)
2012	1,131	456 (40.3%)	256 (22.6%)	419 (37.1%)
2013	979	380 (38.8%)	225 (23.0%)	374 (38.2%)
2014	499	176 (35.3%)	117 (23.5%)	206 (41.3%)

Figure 6. CERAP completion within 5 working days after a child is returned home



The regional pattern of CERAP compliance within 5 working days after reunification exhibited a significant difference between the Cook region and non-Cook regions, with completion rates in Cook region much lower than those in the other regions (see Figure 7 and Appendix Table 16).

Figure 7 Regional CERAP completion within 5 working days after a child is returned home



(2) Every month thereafter until the family case is closed

CERAP compliance every month after a child's reunification was examined by comparing the median case duration (in months) after reunification with the median numbers of CERAP assessments after reunification for each placement entry cohort (see Table 9). The length of the post-reunification case was counted from the return home date through the case close date OR the end of the observation period (September 30, 2014) if the case was not closed at that time. This was then compared to the average (median) number of CERAP assessments done after the return home date. For example, the average length of time a case in the 2005 placement entry cohort was open after reunification was 12 months, and the average number of CERAP assessments completed after reunification was 3, which indicates that for most cases, CERAP assessments were not done monthly as required. The discrepancy between the average number of months after case closure and the average number of CERAP assessments has decreased in more recent entry cohorts.

Table 9. Monthly CERAP completion after a child is returned home

Entry cohort	Reunification cases with at least one CERAP after reunification	Median case duration after reunification (months)	Median # of CERAP assessments after reunification
2005	633	12	3
2006	629	11	3
2007	735	10	4
2008	848	9	4
2009	907	9	5
2010	835	9	5
2011	794	8	5
2012	712	7	5
2013	605	6	4
2014	293	5	3

3.2 Relationship between safety decision and return home

A series of steps was taken in order to examine the relationship between the first CERAP assessment during placement with a safety decision of "safe" and the return home date. First, placement cases without any CERAP assessments prior to reunification were excluded (see Table 10).

Table 10. Reunification cases that had at least one CERAP assessment prior to reunification

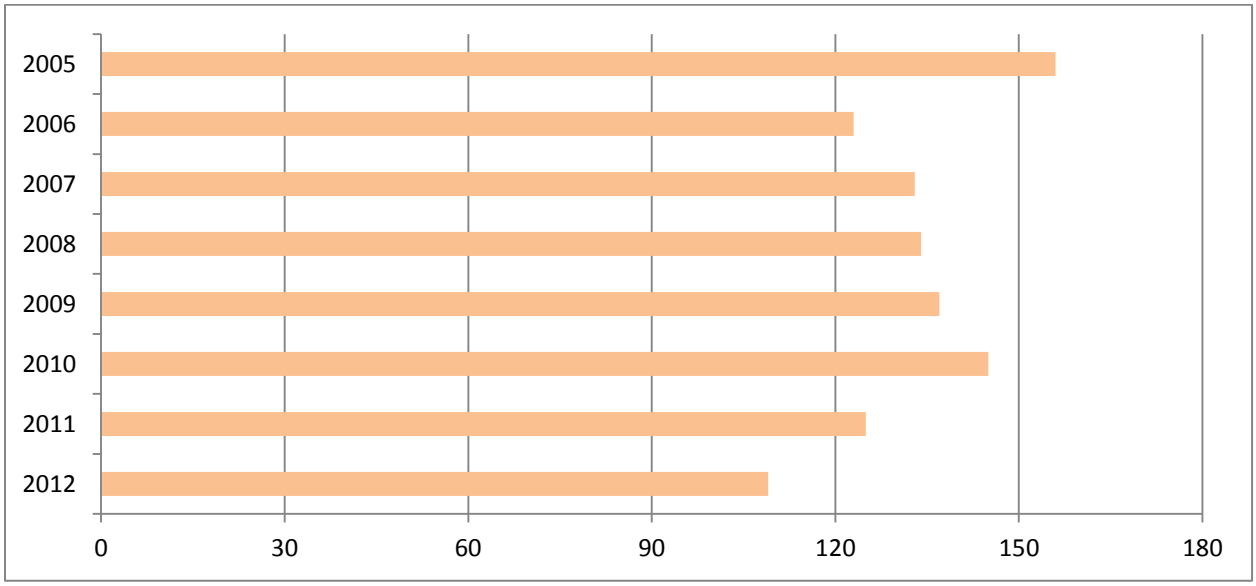
Entry cohort	Reunification cases	Had no CERAP prior to reunification	Had at least one CERAP prior to reunification
2005	1,326	730 (55.0%)	596 (45.0%)
2006	1,140	512 (44.9%)	628 (55.1%)
2007	1,196	499 (41.7%)	697 (58.3%)
2008	1,422	606 (42.6%)	816 (57.4%)
2009	1,407	542 (38.5%)	865 (61.5%)
2010	1,337	498 (37.2%)	839 (62.8%)
2011	1,263	483 (38.2%)	780 (61.8%)
2012	1,131	528 (46.7%)	603 (53.3%)
2013	979	493 (50.4%)	486 (49.6%)
2014	499	282 (56.5%)	217 (43.5%)

Of the reunification cases in each entry cohort that had at least one CERAP prior to reunification, the number of days between the first CERAP assessment with a safety decision of "safe" and the reunification date of the family was computed. The median number of days for each entry cohort is shown in Table 11 and Figure 8. For example, the median number of days from the time when a family was assessed safe to the time of reunification for the FY2005 entry cohort was 156 days. For the majority of cases, several months to a year pass between the time the home environment is assessed as "safe" and the child is returned home.

Table 11. Number of days between a "safe" CERAP decision and reunification

	Number of family cases	25th percentile of days to reunification after the initial "safe" CERAP	Median of days to reunification after the initial "safe" CERAP	75th percentile of days to reunification after the initial "safe" CERAP
2005	596	42	156	434
2006	628	11	123	370
2007	697	20	133	392
2008	816	17	134	439
2009	865	14	137	334
2010	839	33	145	388
2011	780	19	125	347
2012	603	3	109	263

Figure 8. Median number of days between a "safe" CERAP decision and reunification



4. Summary

The current report examined CERAP compliance at four milestones. The series of analyses showed overall low CERAP implementation for placement cases at each milestone (see Table 12).

Table 112. CERAP compliance by milestone

Entry cohort	Milestone 1 within 5 working days after the child is removed from home	Milestone 2 Every 90 calendar days from the case opening date (1st interval)	Milestone 4 within 24 hours prior to reunification	Milestone 6 within 5 working days after reunification
2005	747 (41.0%)	767 (24.4%)	185 (14.0%)	287 (21.7%)
2006	785 (47.0%)	653 (22.5%)	226 (19.8%)	321 (28.2%)
2007	888 (53.1%)	555 (18.9%)	286 (23.9%)	382 (31.9%)
2008	817 (48.4%)	601 (18.9%)	366 (25.7%)	490 (34.5%)
2009	816 (51.1%)	565 (18.8%)	403 (28.6%)	556 (39.5%)
2010	702 (47.1%)	554 (18.4%)	407 (30.4%)	539 (40.3%)
2011	696 (47.7%)	480 (16.5%)	402 (31.8%)	502 (39.8%)
2012	641 (43.1%)	466 (16.7%)	347 (30.7%)	456 (40.3%)
2013	366 (31.2%)	320 (12.5%)	296 (30.2%)	380 (38.8%)
2014	391 (32.8%)	359 (13.7%)	127 (25.5%)	176 (35.3%)

1. The compliance rates for CERAP completion within 5 working days after a worker received a new or transferred case when there were other children in the home of origin ranged from 31.2% (FY2013) to 53.1% (FY2007) in the past 10 years. Rates have decreased in recent years.
2. The majority of placement cases did not receive CERAP assessment every 6 months or 90 days while their cases remained opened. For example, CERAP completion after the first 6 months or 90 days ranged from 12.5% (FY2013) to 24.4% (FY2005).
3. Around a quarter to a third of placement cases had a CERAP assessment completed within 24 hours prior to the first reunification.
4. Less than half of reunification cases had a CERAP assessment within 5 working days after the first child was returned home.
5. In terms of regional performance, the compliance rates vary by region. The Cook region had the lowest CERAP compliance at most of the milestones among the four regions.
6. The amount of time between the first "safe" CERAP assessment and a child's return home date varies considerably among children, but in general has been decreasing over the past several years. The median number of days between the first "safe" CERAP and return home date for families in the 2012 entry cohort was 109 days.

5. Recommendations

Based on the findings of this report, the CERAP Advisory Committee recommends that the Department initiate several actions:

1. Currently, there are no "ticklers" to remind permanency workers to complete the CERAP at the expected milestones. The committee therefore recommends the inclusion of "ticklers" for permanency workers and their supervisors when milestones are missed.

2. Given the low completion rates for all of the CERAP milestones for permanency cases, it is recommended that new CERAP training modules be developed and provided to all DCFS and POS permanency workers and their supervisors. The goal of the training should be to instill a better understanding of the required milestones, emphasize the value of the CERAP in their practice, and underscore the urgency of safety issues throughout the life of the case.

3. Future analyses should examine the relationship between CERAP completion in permanency cases and child safety outcomes (i.e., subsequent screened in reports and subsequent substantiated reports).

4. There was a suggestion that some permanency workers may still be completing the CERAP on "hard copy" rather than in SACWIS and that this may be artificially lowering the completion rates. Therefore, in FY2016, the committee would like to conduct a case review of a randomly selected sample of cases in order to more closely examine CERAP completion rates at certain milestones, particularly the milestone "within 5 working days prior to returning the child home." In addition, any hard copies of the CERAP that are discovered should be entered into SACWIS; this should be done both retrospectively and prospectively.

Appendix Tables

Table 12. Regional CERAP Compliance with Milestone 1

Entry cohort	Region	Had CERAP within 10 days	Had CERAP in 11-60 days	Had CERAP in 60 days or more	No CERAP
2005 (n=1,824)	Cook	260 (34.9%)	9 (1.2%)	35 (4.7%)	441 (59.2%)
	Central	235 (39.8%)	19 (3.2%)	40 (6.8%)	297 (50.3%)
	Northern	132 (51.8%)	8 (3.1%)	26 (10.2%)	89 (34.9%)
	Southern	120 (51.5%)	9 (3.9%)	18 (7.7%)	86 (36.9%)
2006 (n=1,672)	Cook	238 (39.1%)	14 (2.3%)	24 (4.0%)	332 (54.6%)
	Central	274 (46.9%)	23 (3.9%)	46 (7.9%)	241 (41.3%)
	Northern	134 (54.7%)	12 (4.9%)	20 (8.2%)	79 (32.2%)
	Southern	139 (59.2%)	15 (6.4%)	13 (5.5%)	68 (28.9%)
2007 (n=1,673)	Cook	279 (43.5%)	17 (2.7%)	25 (3.9%)	321 (50.0%)
	Central	279 (58.1%)	30 (6.3%)	35 (7.3%)	136 (28.3%)
	Northern	161 (60.1%)	16 (6.0%)	19 (7.1%)	72 (26.9%)
	Southern	169 (59.7%)	19 (6.7%)	34 (12.0%)	61 (21.6%)
2008 (n=1,687)	Cook	229 (33.8%)	26 (3.8%)	33 (4.9%)	390 (57.5%)
	Central	227 (54.8%)	36 (8.7%)	41 (9.9%)	110 (26.6%)
	Northern	207 (60.5%)	25 (7.3%)	25 (7.3%)	85 (24.9%)
	Southern	154 (60.9%)	19 (7.5%)	27 (10.7%)	53 (21.0%)
2009 (n=1,597)	Cook	233 (39.4%)	17 (2.9%)	23 (3.9%)	319 (53.9%)
	Central	244 (55.0%)	38 (8.6%)	37 (8.3%)	125 (28.2%)
	Northern	182 (57.6%)	36 (11.4%)	36 (11.4%)	62 (19.6%)
	Southern	157 (64.1%)	19 (7.8%)	32 (13.1%)	37 (15.1%)
2010 (n=1,492)	Cook	188 (32.9%)	24 (4.2%)	36 (6.3%)	323 (56.6%)
	Central	220 (54.5%)	47 (11.6%)	48 (11.9%)	89 (22.0%)
	Northern	141 (51.1%)	37 (13.4%)	31 (11.2%)	67 (24.3%)
	Southern	153 (63.5%)	13 (5.4%)	22 (9.1%)	53 (22.0%)
2011 (n=1,460)	Cook	208 (37.4%)	17 (3.1%)	21 (3.8%)	310 (55.8%)
	Central	213 (53.5%)	51 (12.8%)	38 (9.6%)	96 (24.1%)
	Northern	148 (52.7%)	36 (12.8%)	35 (12.5%)	62 (22.1%)

	Southern	127 (56.4%)	18 (8.0%)	27 (12.0%)	53 (23.6%)
2012 (n=1,487)	Cook	188 (32.1%)	13 (2.2%)	41 (7.0%)	343 (58.6%)
	Central	187 (47.8%)	26 (6.7%)	58 (14.8%)	120 (30.7%)
	Northern	138 (52.1%)	16 (6.0%)	55 (20.8%)	56 (21.1%)
	Southern	128 (52.0%)	9 (3.7%)	40 (16.3%)	69 (28.1%)
2013 (n=1,175)	Cook	115 (25.3%)	15 (3.3%)	36 (7.9%)	288 (63.4%)
	Central	123 (36.8%)	44 (13.2%)	86 (25.8%)	81 (24.3%)
	Northern	61 (26.6%)	29 (12.7%)	88 (38.4%)	51 (22.3%)
	Southern	67 (42.4%)	13 (8.2%)	42 (26.6%)	36 (22.8%)
2014 (n=1,194)	Cook	100 (24.8%)	21 (5.2%)	34 (8.4%)	248 (61.5%)
	Central	144 (41.9%)	46 (13.4%)	65 (18.9%)	89 (25.9%)
	Northern	55 (25.0%)	36 (16.4%)	58 (26.4%)	71 (32.3%)
	Southern	92 (40.5%)	28 (12.3%)	34 (15.0%)	73(32.2%)

Table 134. Regional CERAP compliance with Milestone 2

Entry Cohort	Region	1st Interval (6months/90 days)		2nd Interval (6months/90 days)		3rd Interval (6months/90 days)	
2005	Cook	320	28.4%	327	29.8%	328	31.1%
	Central	267	26.4%	280	29.2%	271	32.1%
	Northern	82	15.8%	82	16.6%	77	17.5%
	Southern	98	20.2%	104	24.4%	104	28.4%
2006	Cook	260	29.6%	262	30.8%	255	31.4%
	Central	250	24.4%	243	25.1%	233	27.2%
	Northern	64	13.0%	76	16.2%	76	17.8%
	Southern	79	15.6%	88	19.5%	82	20.7%
2007	Cook	242	26.7%	245	28.0%	246	29.4%
	Central	155	15.6%	175	18.9%	162	20.6%
	Northern	71	14.5%	73	15.9%	82	19.5%
	Southern	87	16.1%	87	17.8%	75	17.5%
2008	Cook	283	27.8%	273	27.7%	270	28.8%
	Central	130	14.0%	142	16.7%	146	20.2%
	Northern	101	14.4%	101	15.8%	106	18.5%
	Southern	87	16.5%	75	15.8%	67	16.5%
2009	Cook	219	24.4%	215	24.9%	210	25.5%
	Central	153	16.1%	169	19.6%	166	22.6%
	Northern	102	15.4%	91	14.7%	92	16.8%
	Southern	91	18.0%	82	17.7%	64	16.0%
2010	Cook	219	23.6%	214	24.0%	214	25.4%
	Central	132	14.2%	148	17.2%	129	18.0%
	Northern	115	19.7%	102	19.0%	101	21.7%
	Southern	88	15.6%	92	17.7%	86	18.4%
2011	Cook	180	20.3%	170	20.1%	166	20.9%
	Central	140	15.5%	123	15.0%	116	16.6%
	Northern	70	11.8%	68	12.8%	60	12.9%
	Southern	90	17.4%	87	18.4%	81	20.0%

2012	Cook	169	19.4%	163	19.5%	173	22.3%
	Central	133	16.3%	131	17.4%	111	17.7%
	Northern	80	13.5%	66	12.3%	43	9.3%
	Southern	84	16.5%	73	16.4%	54	14.4%
2013	Cook	129	16.8%	143	19.5%	187	27.0%
	Central	90	11.1%	127	16.7%	104	15.6%
	Northern	46	7.9%	89	16.7%	43	9.3%
	Southern	55	13.5%	59	16.7%	35	11.5%
2014	Cook	70	9.5%	100	13.7%	132	18.5%
	Central	113	13.5%	196	24.0%	134	16.8%
	Northern	96	17.1%	150	27.5%	54	10.3%
	Southern	80	16.3%	122	25.9%	76	16.7%

Table 15. Regional CERAP compliance with Milestone 4

Entry cohort	Region	Had CERAP within 2 days prior to reunification	Had CERAP more than 2 days prior to reunification	No CERAP prior to reunification
2005 (n=1,326)	Cook	19 (4.6%)	91 (22.1%)	320 (73.3%)
	Central	70 (17.8%)	136 (34.6%)	187 (47.6%)
	Northern	34 (13.1%)	104 (40.0%)	122 (46.9%)
	Southern	62 (23.8%)	80 (30.7%)	119 (45.6%)
2006 (n=1,140)	Cook	17 (5.5%)	62 (20.2%)	228 (74.3%)
	Central	90 (24.8%)	173 (47.7%)	100 (27.6%)
	Northern	50 (22.1%)	91 (40.3%)	85 (37.6%)
	Southern	69 (28.3%)	76 (31.2%)	99 (40.6%)
2007 (n=1,196)	Cook	17 (5.7%)	63 (21.1%)	219 (73.2%)
	Central	122 (28.0%)	190 (43.6%)	124 (28.4%)
	Northern	70 (33.2%)	67 (31.8%)	74 (35.1%)
	Southern	77 (30.8%)	91 (36.4%)	82 (32.8%)
2008 (n=1,422)	Cook	17 (4.4%)	76 (19.6%)	294 (76.0%)
	Central	149 (34.8%)	168 (39.3%)	111 (25.9%)
	Northern	124 (35.6%)	110 (31.6%)	114 (32.8%)
	Southern	76 (29.3%)	96 (37.1%)	87 (33.6%)
2009 (n=1,407)	Cook	21 (6.1%)	78 (22.7%)	244 (71.1%)
	Central	161 (37.7%)	164 (38.4%)	102 (23.9%)
	Northern	118 (31.9%)	126 (34.1%)	126 (34.1%)
	Southern	103 (38.6%)	94 (35.2%)	70 (26.2%)
2010 (n=1,337)	Cook	25 (7.2%)	84 (24.1%)	240 (68.8%)
	Central	164 (38.1%)	175 (40.6%)	92 (21.4%)
	Northern	105 (34.8%)	91 (30.1%)	106 (35.1%)
	Southern	113 (44.3%)	82 (32.2%)	60 (23.5%)
2011 (n=1,263)	Cook	21 (7.0%)	70 (23.3%)	209 (69.7%)
	Central	171 (42.8%)	146 (36.5%)	83 (20.8%)
	Northern	116 (37.9%)	77 (25.2%)	113 (36.9%)
	Southern	94 (36.6%)	85 (33.1%)	78 (30.4%)

2012 (n=1,131)	Cook	22 (7.8%)	48 (17.0%)	212 (75.2%)
	Central	122 (36.6%)	96 (28.8%)	115 (34.5%)
	Northern	118 (41.8%)	63 (22.3%)	101 (35.8%)
	Southern	85 (36.3%)	49 (20.9%)	100 (42.7%)
2013 (n=979)	Cook	13 (5.2%)	29 (11.6%)	208 (83.2%)
	Central	115 (37.6%)	86 (28.1%)	105 (34.3%)
	Northern	105 (41.8%)	46 (18.3%)	100 (39.8%)
	Southern	63 (36.6%)	29 (16.9%)	80 (46.5%)
2014 (n=499)	Cook	3 (2.9%)	10 (9.5%)	92 (87.6%)
	Central	40 (30.5%)	36 (27.5%)	55 (42.0%)
	Northern	41 (30.4%)	22 (16.3%)	72 (53.3%)
	Southern	43 (33.6%)	22 (17.2%)	63 (49.2%)

Table 146. Regional Compliance with Milestone 6 (within 5 working days)

Entry cohort	Region	CERAP within 10days	CERAP after 10 days	no CERAP
2005 (n=1,326)	Cook	30 (7.3%)	79 (19.2%)	303 (73.5%)
	Central	112 (28.5%)	108 (27.5%)	173 (44.0%)
	Northern	57 (21.9%)	88 (33.9%)	115 (44.2%)
	Southern	88 (33.7%)	71 (27.2%)	102 (39.1%)
2006 (n=1,140)	Cook	26(8.5%)	62 (20.2%)	219 (71.3%)
	Central	119(32.8%)	113 (31.1%)	131 (36.1%)
	Northern	73 (32.3%)	73 (32.3%)	80 (35.4%)
	Southern	103 (42.2%)	60 (24.6%)	81 (33.2%)
2007 (n=1,196)	Cook	22 (7.4%)	71 (23.8%)	206 (68.9%)
	Central	168 (38.5%)	133 (30.5%)	135 (31.0%)
	Northern	89 (42.2%)	55 (26.1%)	67 (31.8%)
	Southern	103 (41.2%)	94 (37.6%)	53 (21.2%)
2008 (n=1,422)	Cook	26 (6.7%)	84 (21.7%)	277 (71.6%)
	Central	186 (43.5%)	121 (28.3%)	121 (28.3%)
	Northern	156 (44.8%)	92 (26.4%)	100 (28.7%)
	Southern	122 (47.1%)	61 (23.6%)	76 (29.3%)
2009 (n=1,407)	Cook	32 (9.3%)	76 (22.2%)	235 (68.5%)
	Central	192 (45.0%)	121 (28.3%)	114 (26.7%)
	Northern	173 (46.8%)	102 (27.6%)	95 (25.7%)
	Southern	159 (59.6%)	52 (19.5%)	56 (21.0%)
2010 (n=1,337)	Cook	38 (10.9%)	57 (16.3%)	254 (72.8%)
	Central	215 (49.9%)	101 (23.4%)	115 (26.7%)
	Northern	136 (45.0%)	83 (27.5%)	83 (27.5%)
	Southern	150 (58.8%)	55 (21.6%)	50 (19.6%)
2011 (n=1,263)	Cook	24 (8.0%)	47 (15.7%)	229 (76.3%)
	Central	204 (51.0%)	100 (25.0%)	96 (24.0%)
	Northern	137 (44.8%)	86 (28.1%)	83 (27.1%)
	Southern	137 (53.3%)	59 (23.0%)	61 (23.7%)

2012 (n=1,131)	Cook	30 (10.6%)	40 (14.2%)	21 (75.2%)
	Central	158 (47.5%)	105 (31.5%)	70 (21.0%)
	Northern	155 (55.0%)	63 (22.3%)	64 (22.7%)
	Southern	113 (48.3%)	48 (20.5%)	73 (31.2%)
2013 (n=979)	Cook	17 (6.8%)	37 (14.8%)	196 (78.4%)
	Central	147 (48.0%)	91 (29.7%)	68 (22.2%)
	Northern	122 (48.6%)	66 (26.3%)	63 (25.1%)
	Southern	94 (54.7%)	31 (18.0%)	47 (27.3%)
2014 (n=499)	Cook	3 (2.9%)	21 (20.0%)	81 (77.1%)
	Central	62 (47.3%)	28 (21.4%)	41 (31.3%)
	Northern	50 (37.0%)	41 (30.4%)	44 (32.6%)
	Southern	61 (47.7%)	27 (21.1%)	40 (31.3%)