

**Quick Study
Job Aid for
Reviewers**

**QSR PROTOCOL:
Listing of Status and
Practice Indicators**

QSR PROTOCOL INDICATORS

The QSR Protocol provides reviewers with a specific set of indicators to use when examining the status of the child and caretaker and analyzing the responsiveness and effectiveness of the case practice functions promoted in the Case Practice Model. Indicators are divided into two distinct domains: *status* and *practice performance*.

- ◆ **Status indicators** measure the extent to which desired conditions are present in the life the child and the child's parents and/or caretaker—as seen over the past 30 days. Status indicators measure constructs related to *well-being* (e.g., safety, stability, and health) and *functioning* (e.g., the child's academic status and the caretaker's level of functioning). Changes in status over time may be considered the near-term outcomes at a given point in the life of a case.
- ◆ **Practice indicators** measure the extent to which *core practice functions* are applied successfully by practitioners and others who serve as members of the family team. The core practice functions measured are applied to case practice and provide useful case-based tests of performance achievement.

QSR CHILD & CARETAKER STATUS INDICATORS

This version of the QSR Protocol provides nine possible qualitative indicators for measuring the current status of a child and the child's parent and/or caretaker. Status is determined for the most recent 30-day period, unless stated otherwise in the indicator. A status measure could be viewed as a desired outcome for a child, parent, and/or caretaker who, at an earlier time, may have experienced significant difficulties in the area of interest.

- 1a. **SAFETY - Exposure to Threats of Harm:** Degree to which:
 - The child is free of abuse, neglect, and exploitation by others in his/her place of residence, school, and other daily settings.
 - The child's parents and/or caretakers provide the attention, actions, and supports necessary to protect the child from known threats of harm in the home.
- 1b. **SAFETY - Risk to Self/Others:** Degree to which:
 - The child avoids self-endangerment.
 - Refrains from using behaviors that may put others at risk of harm. *[For a child age three years and older]*
- 2. **STABILITY:** Degree to which:
 - The child's daily living, learning, and work arrangements are stable and free from risk of disruptions.
 - The child's daily settings, routines, and relationships are consistent over recent times.
 - Known risks are being managed to achieve stability and reduce the probability of future disruption. *[Timeframe: past 12 months and next 6 months]*
- 3. **LIVING ARRANGEMENT:** Degree to which:
 - Consistent with age and ability, the child is living in the most appropriate/least restrictive living arrangement, consistent with needs of the child for family relationships, assistance with any special needs, social connections, education, and positive peer group affiliation.
 - [If the child is in temporary out-of-home care] the living arrangement meets the child's needs to be connected to his/her language and culture, community, faith, extended family, tribe, social activities, and peer group.

- 4. **PERMANENCY:** Degree to which:
 - The confidence level of those involved (child, parents, caretakers, others) that the child is living with parents or other caretakers who will sustain in this role until the child reaches adulthood and will continue onward to provide enduring family connections and supports in adulthood.
- 5. **PHYSICAL HEALTH:** Degree to which:
 - The child is achieving and maintaining positive health status.
 - And, if the child has a serious or chronic physical illness, the child is achieving his/her best attainable health status given the disease diagnosis and prognosis.
- 6. **EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING:** Degree to which:
 - Consistent with age and ability, the child is displaying an adequate pattern of:
 - Attachment and positive social relationships,
 - Coping and adapting skills,
 - Appropriate self-management of emotions and behaviors.
- 7a. **EARLY LEARNING STATUS:** Degree to which:
 - The child's developmental status is commensurate with age and developmental capacities.
 - The child's developmental status in key domains is consistent with age- and ability-appropriate expectations. *[For a child under 5 years of age]*
- 7b. **ACADEMIC STATUS:** Degree to which:
 - The child [according to age and ability] is: (1) regularly attending school, (2) placed in a grade level consistent with age or developmental level, (3) actively engaged in instructional activities, (4) reading at grade level or IEP expectation level, and (5) meeting requirements for annual promotion and course completion leading to a high school diploma or equivalent. *[For a child age 5 years or older]*
- 8. **PATHWAY TO INDEPENDENCE:** Degree to which:
 - The youth [according to age and ability] is:
 - Gaining skills, education, work experience, connections, relationships, income, housing, and necessary capacities for living safely and functioning successfully independent of agency services, as appropriate to age and ability.
 - Developing long-term connections and informal supports that will support him/her into adulthood.
- 9. **PARENT & CARETAKER FUNCTIONING:** Degree to which:
 - The parent or caretaker, with whom the child is currently residing and/or has a goal of permanency, is/are willing and able to provide the child with the assistance, protection, supervision, and support necessary for daily living.
 - If added supports are required in the home to meet the needs of the child and assist the parent or caretaker, the added supports are meeting the needs.

QSR provides a close-up way of seeing how individual children and families are doing in the areas that matter most. It provides a penetrating view of practice and what is contributing to results.

QSR PRACTICE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

This version of the QSR Protocol provides eleven qualitative indicators for measuring certain core practice functions being provided with and for the child and the child's parents and/or caretakers. Practice performance is determined for the most recent 90-day period for cases that have been open and active for at least the past 90 days.

- 1a. **ENGAGEMENT:** Degree to which:
 - Those working with the child and family (parents and other caretakers) are:
 - Finding family members who can provide support and permanency for the child.
 - Developing and maintaining a culturally competent, mutually beneficial trust-based working relationship with the child and family.
 - Focusing on the child's and family's strengths and needs.
 - Being receptive, dynamic, and willing to make adjustments in scheduling and meeting

locations to accommodate family participation in the service process, including case planning. • Offering transportation and childcare supports, where necessary, to increase family participation in planning and support efforts.

- 1b. **VOICE & CHOICE:** Degree to which: • The child, parents, family members, and caretakers are active ongoing participants (e.g., having a significant role, voice, choice, and influence) in shaping decisions made about child and family strengths and needs, goals, supports, and services.
2. **TEAMING:** Degree to which: • Appropriate family team members have been identified and formed into a working team that shares a common “big picture” understanding and long-term view of the child and family. • Team members have sufficient craft knowledge, skills, and cultural awareness to work effectively with this child and family. • Members of the family team have a pattern of working effectively together to share information, plan, provide, and evaluate services for the child and family.
3. **CULTURAL AWARENESS & RESPONSIVENESS:** Degree to which: • Any significant cultural issues, family beliefs, and customs of the child and family have been identified and addressed in practice (e.g., culture of poverty, urban and rural dynamics, faith and spirituality, child culture, etc.). • The natural, cultural, or community supports appropriate for this child and family are being provided. • Necessary supports and services provided are being made culturally appropriate via special accommodations in the engagement, assessment, planning, and service delivery processes being used with this child and family. *NOTE: This is applied to all families.*
4. **ASSESSMENT & UNDERSTANDING:** Degree to which: • Those involved with the child and family understand: (1) Their strengths, needs, preferences, and underlying issues. (2) What must change for the child to function effectively in daily settings and activities and for the family to support and protect the child effectively. (3) Has developed an understanding of what things must change in order for the child and family to, achieve timely permanence, and improve the child/family’s well-being and functioning. (4) The “big picture” situation and dynamic factors impacting the child and family sufficiently to guide intervention. (5) The outcomes desired by the child and family from their involvement with the system. (6) The path and pace by which permanency will be achieved for a child who is not living with nor returning to the family of origin.
5. **LONG-TERM VIEW:** Degree to which: • There are stated, shared, and understood safety, well-being, and permanency outcomes and functional life goals for the child and family. • These outcomes and goals specify required protective capacities, desired behavior changes, sustainable supports, and other accomplishments necessary for the child and family to achieve and sustain adequate daily functioning and greater self-sufficiency necessary for safe case closure.
6. **PLANNING PROCESS:** Degree to which the planning process: • Is individualized and matched to the child’s and family’s present situation, preferences, near-term needs, and long-term view for safe case closure. • Provides a combination and sequence of strategies, interventions, and supports that are organized into a holistic and coherent service process providing a mix of services that fits the child’s and family’s evolving situation so as to maximize potential results and minimize conflicts and inconveniences.
7. **PLANNING FOR TRANSITIONS & LIFE ADJUSTMENTS:** Degree to which: • The current or next life change transition for the child and family is being planned, staged, and implemented to assure a timely, smooth, and successful adjustment for the child and family after the change occurs. • Plans and arrangements are being made to assure a successful transition and life adjustment in daily settings. • There are well-planned follow-

along supports provided during the adjustment period occurring after a major change is made in a child’s life to ensure success in the home or school situation.

8. **RESOURCE AVAILABILITY:** Degree to which: • Supports, services, and resources (both informal and formal) necessary to implement change strategies are available when needed for/by the child and family. • Any flexible supports and unique service arrangements (both informal and formal) necessary to meet individual needs in the child’s plans are available for use by the child and family on a timely, adequate, and convenient local basis. • Any unit-based and placement-based resources necessary to meet goals in the child’s plans are available for use by the child and family on a timely and adequate basis.
9. **INTERVENTION ADEQUACY:** Degree to which: • Planned and accessible intervention strategies, services, and supports being provided to the child and family have *sufficient power* (precision, intensity, duration, fidelity, and consistency) and *beneficial effect* to produce results necessary to meet near-term needs and achieve outcomes that fulfill the long-term view for safe case closure.
10. **MAINTAINING QUALITY CONNECTIONS:** Degree to which: • Interventions are creatively building and maintaining positive interactions and providing emotional support between the child and his/her parents, siblings, relatives, and other important people in the child’s life, when the child and family members are temporarily living away from one another.
11. **TRACKING & ADJUSTMENT:** Degree to which: • The team routinely monitors the child’s and family’s status and progress, interventions, and results and makes necessary adjustments. • Strategies and services are evaluated and modified to respond to changing needs of the child and family. • Constant efforts are made to gather and assess information and apply knowledge gained to update planned strategies to create a self-correcting service process that leads to finding what works for the child and family.

These core practice indicators, reflecting the agency’s practice model, define the focus and scope of inquiry into case practice for a child and the child’s parents and/or caretakers.

CHILD AND CARETAKER INDICATOR RATINGS

Presented below are general definitions of the rating levels and timeframes applied for child and parent status indicators. The general interpretations for these ratings are defined as follows:

- **Level 6 - Optimal and Enduring Status.** The child or parent/caretaker status situation has been generally optimal [*best attainable taking age and ability into account*] with a consistent and enduring high quality pattern evident, without being less than good (level 5) at any point or any essential aspects. The situation may have had brief moments of minor fluctuation, but functioning in this area has remained generally optimal and enduring, never dipping below level 5 at any moment. Confidence is high that long-term needs or outcomes will be or are being met in this area—perhaps reaching the level indicated for stepping down services in this status area.
- **Level 5 - Good and Stable Status.** The child or parent/caretaker status situation has been substantially and consistently good with indications of stability evident, without being less than fair (level 4) at any moment or in any essential aspect over that time period. The situation may have had brief moments of

minor fluctuation, but functioning in this area has remained generally good and stable, never dipping below level 4 at any moment. This status level is consistent with eventual satisfaction of major needs or attainment of long-term outcomes in the area.

- **Level 4 - Minimally Adequate to Fair Status.** The child or parent/caretaker status situation has been at least minimally adequate at all times over the past 30 days, without being inadequate at any point or any essential aspect over that time. The situation may be dynamic with the possibility of fluctuation or need for adjustment within the near term. The observed pattern may not endure or may have been less than minimally acceptable in the recent past, but not within the past 30 days.
- **Level 3 - Marginally Inadequate Status.** The child or parent/caretaker status situation has been somewhat limited or inconsistent over the past 30 days, being inadequate at some moments in time or in some essential aspect(s) over this time period. The situation may be dynamic with a probability of fluctuation or need for adjustment at the present time. The observed pattern may have endured or may have been less than minimally acceptable in the recent past and somewhat inadequate.
- **Level 2 - Substantially Poor Status.** The child or parent/caretaker status situation has been substantially limited or inconsistent, being inadequate at some or many moments in time or in some essential aspect(s). The situation may be dynamic with a probability of fluctuation or need for improvement at the present time. The observed pattern may have endured or may have been inadequate and unacceptable in the recent past and substantially inadequate.
- **Level 1 - Adverse or Poor and Worsening Status.** The child or parent/caretaker status situation has been substantially inadequate and potentially harmful, with indications that the situation may be worsening at the time of review. The situation may be dynamic with a high probability of fluctuation or a great need for immediate improvement at the present time. The observed pattern may have endured or may have recently become unacceptable, substantially inadequate, and worsening.

SERVICE SYSTEM PERFORMANCE INDICATOR RATINGS

The same general logic is applied to performance indicator rating levels as is used with the status indicators. The general interpretations for performance indicator ratings are defined as follows:

- **Level 6 - Optimal and Enduring Performance.** The service system practice/system performance situation observed for the child or parent has been generally optimal [*best attainable given adequate resources*] with a consistent and enduring pattern evident, without ever being less than good (level 5) at any point or in any essential aspect. The practice situation may have had brief moments of minor fluctuation, but performance in this area has remained generally optimal and stable. This excellent level of performance may be considered “best practice” for the system function, practice, or attribute being measured in the indicator and worthy of sharing with others.
- **Level 5 - Good and Stable Performance.** The service system practice/system performance situation observed for the child or parent has been substantially and

consistently good with indications of stability evident, without being less than fair (level 4) at any moment or in any essential aspect. The situation may have had some moments of minor fluctuation, but performance in this area has remained generally good and stable. This level of performance may be considered “good practice or performance” that is noteworthy for affirmation and positive reinforcement.

- **Level 4 - Minimally Adequate to Fair Performance.** The service system practice/system performance situation observed for the child or parent has been at least minimally adequate at all times over the past 30 days, without being inadequate (level 3 or lower) at any moment or in any essential aspect over that time period. The performance situation may be somewhat dynamic with the possibility of fluctuation or need for adjustment within the near term. The observed performance pattern may not endure long term or may have been less than minimally acceptable in the recent past, but not within the past 30 days. This level of performance may be regarded as the lowest range of the acceptable performance spectrum that would have a reasonable prospect of helping achieve desired outcomes given that this performance level continues or improves. Some refinement efforts are indicated at this level of performance at this time.
- **Level 3 - Marginally Inadequate Performance.** The service system practice/system performance situation observed for the child or parent has been somewhat limited or inconsistent, being inadequate at some moments in time or in some essential aspect(s) over this time period. The situation may be dynamic with a probability of fluctuation or need for adjustment at the present time. The observed pattern may have been less than minimally acceptable (level 3 or lower) in the recent past and somewhat inadequate. This level of performance may be regarded as falling below the range of acceptable performance and would not have a reasonable prospect of helping achieve desired outcomes. Substantial refinement efforts are indicated at this time.
- **Level 2 - Substantially Poor Performance.** The service system practice/system performance situation observed for the child or parent has been substantially limited or inconsistent, being inadequate at some or many moments in time or in some essential aspect(s) recently. The situation may be dynamic with a probability of fluctuation or need for improvement at the present time. The observed pattern may have endured for a while or may have become inadequate and unacceptable in the recent past and substantially inadequate. This level of inadequate performance warrants prompt attention and improvement.
- **Level 1 - Absent, Adverse, or Poor Worsening Performance.** The service system practice/system performance situation observed for the child or parent has been missing, inappropriately performed, and/or substantially inadequate and potentially harmful, with indications that the situation may be worsening at the time of review. The situation may be dynamic with a high probability of fluctuation or a great need for immediate improvement at the present time. This level of absent or adverse performance warrants immediate action or intervention to address the gravity of the situation.

QSR Interpretative Guide for Status Indicator Ratings

<p style="text-align: center;">Maintenance Zone: 5-6</p> <p>Status is favorable. Efforts should be made to maintain and build upon a positive situation.</p>	<p>6 = OPTIMAL & ENDURING STATUS. The <u>best or most favorable status presently attainable</u> for this individual in this area [taking age and ability into account]. The individual is <u>continuing to do great</u> in this area. Confidence is high that <u>long-term needs or outcomes will be or are being met</u> in this area.</p> <p>5 = GOOD & CONTINUING STATUS. Substantially and dependably positive status for the individual in this area with an <u>ongoing positive pattern</u>. This status level is <u>generally consistent with attainment of long-term needs or outcomes</u> in area. Status is "looking good" and likely to continue.</p>	<p style="color: blue; font-weight: bold;">Acceptable Range: 4-6</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Refinement Zone: 3-4</p> <p>Status is minimum or marginal, may be unstable. Further efforts are necessary to refine the situation.</p>	<p>4 = FAIR STATUS. Status is at least <u>minimally or temporarily sufficient</u> for the individual to <u>meet short-term needs or objectives</u> in this area. Status has been no less than <u>minimally adequate</u> at any time in the past 30 days, but may be short-term due to changing circumstances, requiring change soon.</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">Improvement Zone: 1-2</p> <p>Status is problematic or risky. Quick action should be taken to improve the situation.</p>	<p>3 = MARGINAL INADEQUATE STATUS. Status is <u>mixed, limited, or inconsistent</u> and <u>not quite sufficient to meet the individual's short-term needs or objectives</u> now in this area. Status in this area has been somewhat inadequate at points in time or in some aspects over the past 30 days. Any risks may be minimal.</p> <p>2 = POOR STATUS. Status is and may continue to be <u>poor and unacceptable</u>. The individual may seem to be "<u>stuck</u>" or "<u>lost</u>" with <u>status not improving</u>. Any risks may be mild to serious.</p> <p>1 = ADVERSE STATUS. The individual's status in this area is <u>poor and worsening</u>. <u>Any risks of harm</u>, restriction, separation, regression, and/or other poor outcomes <u>may be substantial and increasing</u>.</p>	<p style="color: white; font-weight: bold;">Unacceptable Range: 1-3</p>

QSR Interpretative Guide for Practice Indicator Ratings

<p style="text-align: center;">Maintenance Zone: 5-6</p> <p>Performance is effective. Efforts should be made to maintain and build upon a positive practice situation.</p>	<p>6 = OPTIMAL & ENDURING PERFORMANCE. <u>Excellent, consistent, effective practice</u> for this individual in this function area. This level of performance is indicative of <u>well-sustained exemplary practice and results</u> for the individual.</p> <p>5 = GOOD ONGOING PERFORMANCE. At this level, the system function is <u>working dependably</u> for this individual, under changing conditions and over time. Effectiveness level is <u>consistent with meeting long-term needs and goals</u> for the individual.</p>	<p style="color: blue; font-weight: bold;">Acceptable Range: 4-6</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Refinement Zone: 3-4</p> <p>Performance is minimal or marginal and maybe changing. Further efforts are necessary to refine the practice situation.</p>	<p>4 = FAIR PERFORMANCE. This level of performance is <u>minimally or temporarily sufficient to meet short-term need or objectives</u>. Performance in this area may be no less than <u>minimally adequate</u> at any time in the past 30 days, but may be short-term due to change circumstances, requiring change soon..</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">Improvement Zone: 1-2</p> <p>Performance is inadequate. Quick action should be taken to improve practice now.</p>	<p>3 = MARGINAL INADEQUATE PERFORMANCE. Practice at this level may be <u>under-powered, inconsistent or not well-matched to need</u>. Performance is <u>insufficient for the individual to meet short-term needs or objectives</u>. With refinement, this could become acceptable in the near future.</p> <p>2 = POOR PERFORMANCE. Practice at this level is <u>fragmented, inconsistent, lacking necessary intensity, or off-target</u>. Elements of practice may be noted, but it is <u>incomplete/not operative on a consistent basis</u>.</p> <p>1 = ADVERSE PERFORMANCE. Practice may be <u>absent or not operative</u>. Performance may be <u>missing (not done)</u>. - OR - Practice strategies, if occurring in this area, may be contra-indicated or <u>may be performed inappropriately or harmfully</u>.</p>	<p style="color: white; font-weight: bold;">Unacceptable Range: 1-3</p>