Social Services Time Study (SSTS)

Imminent Risk of Removal – Definition of Foster Care Candidate:

A foster care candidate is a child who is at imminent risk of removal from the home, and reasonable efforts are made to prevent the removal from the home or, if necessary, to pursue the removal from the home.

Criteria for Foster Care Candidacy Determinations:

The county social service agency must document the specific reasons a child is at imminent risk of removal and the specific action(s) the agency has taken to prevent removal, or to pursue the removal of a child from the home. Generally, if a determination of imminent risk of removal has been made, the county must:

- Have been providing services to the child
- Document the reasonable or active efforts to:
    - Prevent the need for removal from the home, or
    - Remove the child from the home.
- Use the *Foster Care Candidacy Determination* form, established by DHS as required documentation to meet federal requirements.
- Ensure that foster care candidacy determinations are individualized on a case-by-case basis. No group of children can be automatically included or excluded as foster care candidates.
- Re-determine foster care candidacy every six months.

Foster Care Candidates listed for SSTS:

A list of children determined to be foster care candidates will be compiled by the county foster care candidacy specialist and shared with the SSTS participants. The list may be generated solely by the foster care candidacy specialist or include names of children recommended by county social workers. This remains a local decision.

The foster care candidacy program is not a substitute for the child protection reporting system. Mandated reporters must make reports of child abuse and/or neglect to county child protection or law enforcement. If the SSTS participant believes a child is at imminent risk of removal from the home due to abuse and/or neglect, the participant shall make a mandated report to county child protection or law enforcement.