



North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services Division of Social Services

2407 Mail Service Center • Raleigh, North Carolina 27699-2407

Michael F. Easley, Governor
Dempsey Benton, Secretary

Sherry S. Bradsher, Director
(919) 733-3055

Date

Director
County DSS
P.O. Box
Town, N.C.

Dear M:

North Carolina has operated an identifiable child welfare quality assurance system since 1993. The review process was known as the Children's Services Biennial Review. It was conducted in all 100 counties every two years and emphasis was placed on inputs and making certain that all procedures were followed and not as focused on outcomes. The hypothesis was that if procedures were followed, outcomes were positive and to a certain degree that was the case.

In 2001, the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) began to conduct Child and Family Services Reviews (CFSRs) of all 50 states and districts to examine their child welfare programs. At that time, North Carolina revised the child welfare reviews of the counties to more closely align with the federal ACF review. ACF has set a very high standard of performance for the CFSRs. The first review required 90% substantial conformity in all areas reviewed, and the second review required 95% substantial conformity. **ACF clearly acknowledges that not all states would be able to achieve the high standard but should incrementally move towards that standard.** The focus of the CFSR process is on continuous quality improvement to achieve the positive outcomes of safety, permanency and well-being for children and families.

Now the State CFSR process closely mirrors the Federal CFSR process and is outcome focused. It is designed to accurately measure practice and progress towards successfully meeting the outcomes in the CFSR process. **While the movement towards becoming more outcome focused will strengthen the efforts towards meeting the requirements outlined by ACF in the Federal CFSR process, we recognize that county ratings on the State CFSR may be impacted as a result of this.** It may be difficult to interpret how the State CFSR measures outcomes only and does not account for the diligent efforts made by staff when it is required in policy. This may be awkward to explain to those in your community who are not aware of the many inputs required to document social work activity. We must all be reminded that even though certain activities were performed, that certain outcome was not achieved.

Certain policies will not be changed as they provide for good case work practice, case building, supervisory oversight and tracking case activity. However, to ensure the integrity of the State CFSR and to meet ACF CFSR requirements, this review will remain outcome focused and inputs such as diligent efforts, which are required in policy, will be identified as area needing improvement. While maintaining the integrity of ACF's model, if an **outcome is not achieved, which means it is not in substantial conformity**, due only to the documentation of diligent efforts, a Program Improvement Plan (PIP) will not be required **and this will be reflected** in the CFSR report. Your Children's Programs Representative (CPR) will provide follow up with your agency regarding ways to ensure the focus on achieving the outcome.

Attached, please find the Child and Family Services Review report regarding your recent review. The review process involves the analysis of information concerning management, practice, and outcomes in the areas of child protective services, foster care, and adoptions. The findings are focused on achieving the outcomes of safety, permanency and well-being for children and their families served by child welfare.

The information from your agency's self-report is also included as a part of this Child and Family Services Review Report. The most recent Experience Report for _____ County, other Level # counties and the state and the PQA 182 chart that includes the six national data standards and benchmarks that the state must meet to be in substantial conformity in the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) are attached to this report. More detailed information in the form of analysis and graphs can be located at the following website: (<http://ssw.unc.edu/cw/>).

We congratulate you and your staff on achieving substantial conformity in _____ of the seven outcome areas of the review. Because the _____ outcome(s) that you did not achieve substantial conformity in was/were around the area of diligent efforts, which were made as required by policy, a Program Improvement Plan will not be required.

We appreciate the cooperation from you and your staff in helping us complete this review process and hope that the report becomes a helpful tool in achieving the goal of a safe, permanent home for all children in your county. If you have any questions, please contact Beverly Daniel at (919) 733-9461 or at beverly.daniel@ncmail.net.

Sincerely,

Charisse Johnson, Chief
Family Support and Child Welfare Services

Attachments

cc: County Manager
Chairperson, Board of County Commissioners
Chairperson, County Board of Social Services
Jo Ann Lamm, Deputy Director, DSS
Beverly Daniel, CFS Program Review & Program Compliance Monitoring Team Supervisor
Keith Davis, Local Support Operations Supervisor
Children's Programs Representative