

**DSS ADMINISTRATIVE LETTER
FAMILY SUPPORT AND CHILD WELFARE SERVICES
FSCWS-18-07**

TO: County Directors of Social Services

ATTENTION: Child Welfare Services Program Managers and Supervisors, and Social Workers

DATE: December 20, 2007

**SUBJECT: REVIEW PROCESS, PROTOCOL/INSTRUMENT
AND REVIEW PILOT PROCESS**

EFFECTIVE DATE: IMMEDIATELY

This administrative letter is to provide information regarding changes in the Child and Family Services Review Process, Protocol and Instrument, and the implementation of the Child and Family Services Review Pilot Process. These changes are the result of the Division's Federal Child and Family Services Review that was completed the week of March 26-30, 2007, and training that Division staff, Child and Family Services Program Review Team received from the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) in October 2007.

The federal review includes findings from case reviews and systemic factors. Our Quality Assurance System (our Child and Family Services Review Process) was one of 5 of the 7 systemic factors found to be in substantial conformity. Although our Quality Assurance (QA) system was found to be in substantial conformance during the Federal Child and Family Review Process, there was concern that the State's ratings for the majority of individual items rated in the Child and Family review Process were extremely high and differed considerably from the Federal 2007 Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) case review findings. There was also concern that the State's QA system, as is, may not be effective in identifying the strengths and needs of the service delivery system, and therefore may not result in an accurate evaluation of the effectiveness of program improvement measures.

Shortly after the Federal CFSR process was completed, Division management and members from NCACDSS convened a work group to address the problems identified with our QA system. As a result of extensive work and input from the workgroup, the

CFSR Pilot Process was developed. The Pilot Process is being implemented as a result of that work. Seven counties were selected to participate in the Pilot Process in November 2007. The seven counties are: Catawba, Mecklenburg, Lincoln, Orange, Onslow, Buncombe and Carteret.

At the same time the Pilot Process was being developed, Division staff, the Child and Family Services Program Review Team began to make changes to the CFSR Instrument, Process and Protocol to better mirror the Federal Instrument, Process and Protocol and to

capture clarification around rating items on the instrument after training with ACF in Atlanta

in October 2007. As a result of the Federal Review and training with ACF, some policy decisions will need to be considered based on the guidance from ACF. Our child welfare

system will need to decide if the guidance warrants a policy change or for the purposes of the CFSR, our state will stand by what currently is in policy and accept the finding for the sole purpose of the CFSR. Those policies are regarding diligent efforts to locate the child and counting contacts with the child and parent in placement cases by contractual foster care providers. We have requested that ACF re-examine their guidance regarding contacts with the child and parents. Until Children's Services Committee can review these policy issues, we will continue to follow the policy. The following significant changes have been made in the CFSR Instrument for rating purposes:

- There is more emphasis on contacting and maintaining contact with fathers and paternal relatives as resources for children in several items in the 7 outcome areas.
- Jurisdiction cases (formerly Cross County) will be included in the selection of cases for the CFSR process. The process for case selection, including Jurisdiction cases, is contained in the Pilot County Protocol as well as the revised traditional CFSR Protocol
- When rating Item #7, under Permanency I, 12 of the most recent 22 months instead of 15 of the most recent months will be the criteria for rating ASFA TPR requirements and exceptions.
- When rating items #19 and #20, the social worker's contacts with the family will be rated according to the level of risk rating assigned the case, e.g. high/intensive or moderate.
- If repeat maltreatment occurs, item #2 under Safety Outcome I will be rated as an area needing improvement, regardless of the circumstances, perpetrator or agency efforts.

- More emphasis has been placed on meeting the requirements of the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) when rating item #14 under Permanency Outcome II, Preserving Connections.
- There will be more emphasis on Child and Family Teams (CFTs) when rating item #18, Well Being Outcome I, pertaining to the Case Planning process.

Other changes may be forthcoming as the Division has requested clarification from ACF around several items that are rated on the instrument. You will be notified in a timely manner should this occur.

Please note that each county agency is responsible for developing a means of logging Jurisdiction cases for identification purposes for the CFSR case sample selection, and for Pilot Counties, their Internal Reviews as well.

In response to training received from ACF in October, the Division has developed a training curriculum which contains in detail the changes in the ratings on the CFSR Instrument as well as lessons learned from our recent Federal CFSR. This training entitled "Child and Family Services Review Training: Understanding the Instruments,

Ratings and Outcomes" is a required training for county staff wanting to participate in their county's state CFSR process. Participants will receive 6 contact hours for completion of the

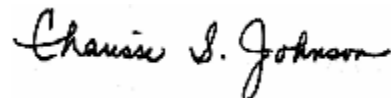
training. Pilot Counties are receiving the initial trainings which began the latter part of November 2007 and will continue through mid December.

Four additional trainings have been scheduled for January 2008 and can be found on the Division's training website. Counties with Child and Family Services Reviews scheduled for February 2008-April 2008 will receive priority as participants in the January trainings. Participants can access the Divisions training website to register for this training at [NCSWLearn](http://www.ncswlearn.com). This training will be ongoing and will be updated accordingly on this website.

Attached are the revised CFSR Instrument, Instructions, Protocol and Pilot County Protocol for your review. This information is also available on the Division's website at <http://www.dhhs.state.nc.us/dss/stats/cw.htm>.

If you have questions regarding any information contained in this Administrative Letter, please contact Beverly Daniel at (919) 733-9461.

Sincerely,



Charisse S. Johnson, Chief

Family Support and Child Welfare Services

Attachments:

[Onsite Review Instrument Instructions](#)

[Protocol for Pilot Counties Attachment A](#)

[Review Protocol](#)

[Onsite Review Instrument Worksheet](#)

cc:	Sherry S. Bradsher
	Jo Ann Lamm
	Sarah Barham
	Family Support and Child Welfare Team Leaders
	Children's Program Representatives
	Work First Program Representatives
	Local Business Liaisons