



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 CSFRs. 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 CSFR process is on continuous quality improvement to achieve the positive outcomes of safety, permanency and well-being for children and families.

Now the State CSFR process closely mirrors the Federal CSFR process and is outcome focused. It is designed to accurately measure practice and progress towards successfully meeting the outcomes in the CSFR process. **While the movement towards becoming more outcome focused will strengthen the efforts towards meeting the requirements outlined by ACF in the Federal CSFR process, we recognize that county ratings on the State CSFR may be impacted as a result of this.** It may be difficult to interpret how the State CSFR 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 CSFR and to meet ACF CSFR 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 CSFR 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 # out of the seven outcome areas of the review. A formal Program Improvement Plan is required for the # outcome areas in which the agency did not achieve substantial conformity. Your CPR is available to assist you in formulating your improvement strategies. The Plan should be addressed to Keith Davis, Team Supervisor, in the Local Support Operations, 325 N. Salisbury St. Room 756D, 2439 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC. 27699-2439. If you have any questions, please contact Beverly Daniel at (919) 733-9461 or at beverly.daniel@ncmail.net.

We appreciate the cooperation of you and your staff in this review process. The report findings should be used to evaluate your incremental progress towards achieving the outcomes of safety, permanency and well- being for the children served by child welfare in your county.

Sincerely,

Charisse Johnson, Section Chief
Family Support and Child Welfare Services

Attachments

cc: County Manager
Board of County Commissioners
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 Team Supervisor
Children's Programs Representative