



NC DEPARTMENT OF  
**HEALTH AND  
HUMAN SERVICES**

JOSH STEIN • Governor

DEV DUTTA SANGVAI • Secretary

LISA TUCKER CAULEY • Division Director, Human Services

**April 10, 2025**

**DEAR COUNTY DIRECTORS OF SOCIAL SERVICES**

**ATTENTION: DIRECTORS, CHILD WELFARE PROGRAM ADMINISTRATORS,  
MANAGERS, SUPERVISORS, AND SOCIAL WORKERS**

**SUBJECT: INTAKE AND ASSESSMENT POLICY UPDATES TO ALIGN WITH SOP AND  
SDM CHANGES**

**REQUIRED ACTION:**  Information Only  Time Sensitive  Immediate

NCDHHS DSS is committed to ensuring that counties are provided with protocol and guidance that supports compliance with the law and best practices for providing child welfare services to children and families. As North Carolina makes the transition to using Safety Organized Practice (SOP), NCDHHS DSS has partnered with Evident Change to revise our Structured Decision Making (SDM) Tools and create e-learnings to assist the child welfare workforce with putting SOP into practice.

All of the newly revised SDM Tools have been built into our PATH NC system. A SDM Intake and Assessment manual that aligns with PATH NC has been developed with the goal of alignment with statute, improving practice through the addition of SOP, and increase consistency through use of the revised SDM Tools. NCDHHS DSS has also made revisions to the Intake and Assessment policy manuals to ensure alignment in practice as counties await transition into the system. This will allow for clear and consistent policy regardless of whether you have begun using PATH NC or not.

The revised manual changes include:

- **CPS Intake**
  - Immediate timeframe defined as 8 hours (initiation for all timeframes is defined as in person interview with each child residing in the household in private)
  - Removal of required reporting to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) by local child welfare agencies.
  - Revised requirement to report to law enforcement when children are identified as abducted, runaway, or missing
- **CPS Family and Investigative Assessments:**
  - Removal of reporting to NCMEC

**NC DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES • DIVISION OF SOCIAL SERVICES**

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AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY / AFFIRMATIVE ACTION EMPLOYER

- Addition of engaging parents to report abducted, runaway, or missing children to law enforcement
- Temporary Safety Provider revisions
- Initial Provider Assessment changes
- Interference case revisions
- RIL revisions
- Process for obtaining previous CME records
- Removal of Malicious reporting

The revised protocol and guidance will provide workers with what must be done and how it should be done. NCDHHS DSS recognizes that this will require a shift in practice and want to provide support in making these changes.

## Next Steps

In preparation for the roll out of PATH NC, NCDHHS DSS has partnered with the Family and Children's Resource Program, UNC School of Social Work (FCRP) to train our newly revised SDM Tools to the Group 1 counties.

The revised changes were presented to the local county child welfare agencies at the Children's Services Committee on April 9, 2025.

Live webinars, *Child Welfare Policy Changes* will be provided to support local county child welfare workers and supervisors with policy changes and implementation. All of the webinars will be recorded and one will be uploaded to ncswlearn.org to view for those unable to attend. Please see the dates and times listed below:

May 1<sup>st</sup>- Child Welfare Policy Changes Webinars - 1-2:00pm:

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/8457788034026974555>

May 6<sup>th</sup>- Child Welfare Policy Changes Webinar – 11-Noon:

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/2155628176661463126>

**Office Hours for Safety Changes** for Social Work Supervisors and Program Managers will be provided to discuss all safety changes and answer questions for each PATH-NC Intake and Assessment Group after PATH-NC training has been completed. Additional information will go out as training dates are confirmed.

A Child Welfare Policy Manual Revisions document (aka Crosswalk) is attached that provides a preview of the new policy. This policy will be published on April 30, 2025, on the Division's web page that can be found at <https://policies.ncdhhs.gov/divisional-n-z/social-services/child-welfare-services/cws-policies-manuals/> for your review. This policy will become effective on May 12, 2025.

If you have any questions, please contact your Regional Child Welfare Specialist or Amanda Hubbard at [Amanda.Hubbard@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:Amanda.Hubbard@dhhs.nc.gov), DSS HS Program Consultant.

Sincerely,

*Kathy P. Stone*

**Kathy P. Stone**  
Section Chief for Safety  
NCDHHS Division of Social Services

Cc: Lisa Tucker Cauley, Senior Director for Child, Family and Adult Services  
Adrian Daye, Deputy Director for Child Welfare Practice  
Donna Fayko, Deputy Director for Child Welfare Operations  
Kimaree Sanders, Section Chief for Regulatory and Licensing  
Peter West, Section Chief for County Operations  
Heather McAllister, Section Chief for Child and Family Services

Attachments: Screening Decision Crosswalk

**CWS-21-2025**