



THE NC CHILD WELFARE TRAUMA-INFORMED ASSESSMENT IS COMING

Legislative Background

The North Carolina Child Welfare Trauma Informed Assessment (Session Law 2023-134, House Bill 259) establishes a structured, standardized process for referring child welfare involved youth who are determined to be at imminent risk of entering foster care, or have entered foster care, for a trauma-informed clinical assessment. This process ensures consistent, trauma-responsive support and guidance tailored to each child's unique needs.

What It Is

A structured process to refer youth entering foster care, or at risk of entry, for a standardized trauma-informed assessment that helps identify & understand a child's:

- Trauma history
- Trauma impacts
- Current needs, strengths, and challenges
- Family dynamics
- Support systems

Connecting families to the right supports at the right time.

Why It Matters

- Early identification of needs guides case planning and service referrals.
- Shared understanding between DSS and mental health providers ensures coordinated, compassionate care.
- Better outcomes for children and families include greater stability, stronger attachment, and improved emotional well-being.

What to Expect

- Phased rollout across NCDHHS DSS regions beginning July 2026.
- Comprehensive training for DSS staff & clinicians.
- Ongoing support & technical assistance to promote successful implementation.
- Practical tools & strategies to integrate the assessment into everyday case planning.

