



NC DEPARTMENT OF
**HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES**

JOSH STEIN • Governor

DEVDDUTTA SANGVAI • Secretary

LISA TUCKER CAULEY • Division Director, Human Services

July 23, 2026

DEAR COUNTY DIRECTORS OF SOCIAL SERVICES

**ATTENTION: DIRECTORS, CHILD WELFARE PROGRAM ADMINISTRATORS,
MANAGERS, SUPERVISORS**

SUBJECT: Statewide Child Welfare Goals for SFY 2026-2027

PURPOSE: To analyze trends, streamline practice, address challenges, and promote continuous quality improvement across all child welfare practice areas.

REQUIRED ACTION: ☒ Information Only ☐ Time Sensitive ☐ Immediate

Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) is a foundational process that promotes consistency, accountability, and positive outcomes in North Carolina's child welfare system. Through the CQI cycle, data is used to drive decision-making and measurable improvements at the state, regional, and county levels. North Carolina's Department of Health and Human Services Division of Social Services (NCDHHS DSS) is committed to working with counties in a continuous quality improvement process to improve outcomes for children and families.

Data from various case samples, to include OSRI reviews, program performance evaluations by Regional Child Welfare Specialists, and fatalities, have been reviewed and analyzed to identify practice trends across NC's child welfare system. To target the areas that can most significantly impact safety, permanency and well-being of children and families, NCDHHS DSS has identified four primary practice areas to focus upon in SFY 2026-2027. Those four areas are:

- **Safety Assessments** – Ensuring that safety assessments are timely, thorough, and accurately reflect the current conditions of the child's environment is critical. Safety threats must be clearly identified, documented, and addressed with appropriate interventions and decision-making.
- **Quality and Quantity of Contacts** – Consistent and meaningful contacts that address safety and risk with children and families are essential. Both the frequency and effectiveness of these interactions, with attention to visits being purposeful, child-focused, and supportive of case information impact outcomes for families.
- **Supervisory Oversight** – Effective supervisory oversight is a cornerstone of strong case practice. Appropriate elements of supervision are outlined in policy. How supervisors guide, support, and hold staff accountable informs case direction and decision-making.
- **Case Plans** – Case plans should be individualized, strength-based, and clearly aligned with identified safety concerns and family needs. Plans must be behaviorally specific,

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

LOCATION: 820 S. Boylan Avenue, McBryde Building, Raleigh, NC 27603

MAILING ADDRESS: 2406 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-2406

www.ncdhhs.gov • TEL: 919-527-6340 • FAX: 919-334-1018

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY / AFFIRMATIVE ACTION EMPLOYER

actionable, regularly updated, and developed with family engagement to support progress towards permanency and stability.

These goals have been longstanding areas of focus during consultations and are now being elevated as shared priorities statewide and are incorporated into our Program Improvement Plan. Reviewing these four elements began in April and will continue throughout SFY 2026-27. To support progress, additional training, guidance, and resources will be provided throughout the year.

We appreciate your ongoing dedication to this important work and collaboration in striving for excellence in child welfare services.

Sincerely,



Donna F. Fayko
Deputy Director, Child Welfare Services
Division of Social Services

Cc: Lisa Tucker Cauley, Division Director, Human Services
Tammy Shook, Interim Assistant Deputy Director, Child Welfare Services
William "Ben" Rose, Lead Regional Director
Adrian Daye, Section Chief, Permanency
Meredith Houchins, Interim Section Chief, County Operations
Heather McAllister, Section Chief, Well Being
Kimaree Sanders, Section Chief, Regulatory and Licensing
Kathy Stone, Section Chief, Safety

CWS-54-2026