



NC DEPARTMENT OF
**HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES**

JOSH STEIN • Governor

DEVPUTTA SANGVAI • Secretary

LISA TUCKER CAULEY • Division Director, Human Services

September 4, 2025

DEAR COUNTY DIRECTORS OF SOCIAL SERVICES

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

SUBJECT: RESOURCE FAMILY RESEARCH ON RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING

REQUIRED ACTION: ☐ Information Only ☒ Time Sensitive ☒ Action Required

The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Social Services (NCDHHS DSS) remains steadfast in its commitment to the recruitment, development, and retention of resource families across the state. NCDHHS DSS recognizes the critical role these families play in supporting children and youth in foster care and thus continues to explore innovative strategies to enhance its efforts in this area. As part of this commitment, Dr. Nicholas Carnes of Duke University contacted NCDHHS DSS to collaborate in improving the state's Diligent Recruitment and Retention (DRR) strategies by identifying promising practices and areas for enhancement.

Dr. Carnes leads the diligent recruitment retention research initiative aimed at examining how County DSS agencies across North Carolina recruit and train resource families. The findings from this research will help inform future policy and programmatic decisions, ensuring that recruitment and retention efforts are strategically focused and responsive to the needs of both agencies and families. By leveraging data-driven insights, NCDHHS DSS seeks to build a more resilient and supportive system for resource families statewide.

Dr. Carnes and his research team will conduct confidential interviews with supervisors and staff involved in the foster home licensing process. These interviews are designed to gather qualitative insights into local recruitment and training practices of resource families. Each interview is expected to take approximately one hour via phone or Zoom during the months of September and October. **All information shared during these interviews will be treated with strict confidentiality. No data will be reported in a manner that identifies individual participants or counties.** The purpose of this approach is to ensure candid feedback while protecting the privacy of all contributors. Agencies interested in participating are encouraged to contact Dr. Carnes directly at nicholas.carnes@duke.edu to coordinate scheduling by September 18, 2025.

NCDHHS DSS and Dr Carnes are deeply grateful for your thoughtful consideration and continued support of this important research initiative which seeks to enhance the safety, stability, and long-term success of resource families across North Carolina. We also wish to express our sincere appreciation to the County DSS agencies that have already contributed to this effort.

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

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Your engagement has been instrumental in advancing our understanding of current practices and shaping data-informed improvements to recruitment and retention strategies statewide.

Should you have any questions, please contact Foster Home Licensing Manager Jenny Millsaps at jenny.millsaps@dhhs.nc.gov. Thank you for your partnership in this vital work.

Sincerely,



Kimaree Sanders, MSW, MPA

Section Chief for Regulatory and Licensing

Division of Social Services, Child Welfare

North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services

Cc: Lisa T. Cauley, Division Director, Human Services, Child, Family, and Adult Regional Support
Adrian Daye, Deputy Director for Child Welfare Practice
Donna Fayko, Deputy Director for Child Welfare Operations
Kathy Stone, Section Chief for Safety
Meredith Houchins, Acting Section Chief for Child Welfare Operations
Heather McAllister, Section Chief for Child and Family Services

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