



## 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  
Carmen Hooker Odom, Secretary

Pheon E. Beal, Director  
(919) 733-3055

July 5, 2002

**DEAR COUNTY DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES**

**ATTENTION: CHILD WELFARE SUPERVISORS**

**Subject: Revised Child and Family Services Review Instructions and Instruments**

As you are aware, significant changes were made to the biennial review process as a result of the federal Child and Family Services Review in North Carolina in March 2001 and the subsequent Program Improvement Plan for the state. In collaboration with two separate committees of the North Carolina Association of County Directors of Social Services, the Division revised the biennial review process and review instruments to mirror the federal Child and Family Services Reviews. The revised process was piloted in two counties in September 2001 and fully implemented effective October 1, 2001.

As of June 30, 2002, 41 counties have had a Child and Family Services Review using this new process. To date, the new process has been well-received by county DSS staff. The partnering of Division and county staff as reviewers has been particularly helpful, as well as the increased focus on outcomes in children's services and interviews with significant persons involved in the cases.

More recently, the federal government issued a revised Child and Family Services Review instrument that they have now begun using in the federal reviews. The instrument is generally the same in most of the items. They have reformatted the review instrument to be more user friendly and have added much clearer instructions for each item. There are some significant changes that include setting time frames for rating repeat maltreatment and re-entry to foster care as well as time frames for achieving reunification and adoption. The item on the previous instrument that rated "independent living" has been changed to an item that rates the permanency goal of reunification or custody or guardianship to relatives. Independent living issues have been folded into other items, but are not in a stand alone item. There has also been a change to incorporate multiple response in CPS in the items where that would apply. Also, there has been a modification to the determination of substantial compliance in Permanency Outcome #1 and Well-Being Outcome #1.

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Given the fact that the revised federal review instrument will be used in North Carolina's next Child and Family Services Review which will occur in late 2003 or early 2004, the Division and the Children's Services Committee agreed that we needed to adapt the revised federal review instrument for use with our biennial Child and Family Services Reviews of county Departments of Social Services. We have now completed adapting the revised instrument for our use and plan to implement the use of this instrument effective August 1, 2002. The revised instrument and accompanying instructions are attached, and a hard copy will be mailed to each county Department of Social Services. Through this implementation of the revised instrument, we will continue to hold ourselves accountable for the same level of performance that the federal government will be holding the state accountable for our next federal review.

The protocol for these reviews remains unchanged. We have added a separate instrument, which is located at the end of the attached document, for reviewing reports that are not accepted for investigation. This one-page review instrument for screened-out reports will save us from having to use a whole set of the review instrument for the Safety #1 Outcome. However, the content remains the same as in the current review process.

We strongly urge each county to closely review the revised Child and Family Services Review Instrument and instructions, particularly counties that are scheduled for review after July 31, 2002.

We continue to believe that the Child and Family Services Review process will significantly contribute to each county's ability to document substantial compliance with the federally-approved outcome areas and ultimately to the state's ability to achieve substantial compliance and avoid financial sanctions. In addition to the hard copy of this letter and the review instrument, you will be able to access them on the Children's Services website. If you have any questions regarding the revised Child and Family Services Review instrument, please contact Sara Anderson Mims at (919) 733-9461.

Sincerely,



Charles C. Harris, Chief  
Children's Services Section

CCH/sam

#### Attachments

cc: Pheon Beal  
Sherry Bradsher  
Paul Lesieur  
Children's Programs Representatives  
Children's Services Team Leaders

**CS-21-2002**