



NC DEPARTMENT OF
**HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES**

ROY COOPER • Governor
MANDY COHEN, MD, MPH • Secretary
SUSAN OSBORNE • Assistant Secretary for County
Operations for Human Services

July 2, 2021

DEAR COUNTY DIRECTOR of SOCIAL SERVICES

ATTENTION: DIRECTORS, CHILD WELFARE PROGRAM MANAGERS, and FISCAL STAFF

SUBJECT: FAMILY REUNIFICATION SERVICES POLICY CHANGES AND MONITORING UPDATE

REQUIRED ACTION: X Information Only Time Sensitive Immediate

PURPOSE: To notify county child welfare agencies of cross-function policy changes and updated monitoring requirements for family reunification services.

Family Reunification Services are designed to support families in eliminating the conditions which led to the child's removal and to build protective factors that enable the parent(s) to safely parent the child in their own home. Changes in how county child welfare agencies can use funding for Family Reunification Services have been made to the Family Reunification Services Policy, which has been updated under the Cross-Function Section of the Child Welfare Manual. This update also addresses the monitoring requirements provided in the DCDL_CWS_11_21 released on April 9, 2021.

Policy Changes

The most significant policy changes result from the Family First Prevention Services Act, which:

- Eliminated the previous 15-month time-limit on the use of Title IV-B funds for family reunification services for children in foster care;
- Provided a child who is reunified with their family with access to 15-months of family reunification services, beginning on the date the child returns home; and
- Changed the name of the program from "Time-Limited Family Reunification Services" to "Family Reunification Services."

For more information on Family First, see [\(PI-18-07 – Public Law 115-123, the Family First Services Act\)](#)

These NC DSS policy changes are posted in the Child Welfare Manual under [Cross Function](#).

Monitoring Requirement Update

NC DSS is required to monitor services provided by the local child welfare agencies that are funded with federal dollars, including IVB-2 Family Reunification Services. NC DSS has updated the family reunification monitoring plan to include the following reporting and monitoring activities:

1. Monitoring Review: Since May 2021, NC DSS has monitored 12 county child welfare agencies for Family Reunification Services. Each local child welfare agency using these funds will be monitored at

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least once within a three-year period. Monitoring verifies child eligibility, service time frame, allowable services and activities provided, and supporting documentation for expenditures billed to NC DSS (such as day sheets or invoices).

2. Annual Report: County child welfare agencies must submit an annual Family Reunification Program Report to NC DSS. The report template that was provided with DCDL_CWS_11_21 is also attached to this DCDL. The SFY 2021 Report covers the allocation period of June 2020 through May 2021 service months and was due on June 15, 2021. County agencies, who have not already done so, must submit their report immediately to remain in compliance.
3. The monthly Family Reunification Addendum has been CANCELLED. County child welfare agencies are not required to submit this addendum.
4. Annual Plan: Each county child welfare agency must develop an annual plan describing how they will spend their Title IVB-2 Family Reunification Services allocation. The plan template will be released soon. The plan will be due in August 2021.

If you have any questions or updates, please contact Wendy Clewis at wendy.clewis@dhhs.nc.gov

Sincerely,



Kathy Stone, Section Chief for CPS and Prevention

cc: Susan Osborne, Assistant Secretary for County Operations
Lisa Cauley, Senior Director for Child, Family and Adult Services
Teresa Strom, Section Chief for County Operations
Carla McNeill, Section Chief of Permanency
Linda Waite, Acting Section Chief for Licensing & Regulatory

Attachments: Family Reunification Services Annual Report Template

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