



NC DEPARTMENT OF
**HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES**
Division of Social Services

ROY COOPER • Governor

MANDY COHEN, MD, MPH • Secretary

SUSAN OSBORNE • Assistant Secretary for County
Operations for Human Services

December 3, 2021

DEAR COUNTY DIRECTORS OF SOCIAL SERVICES

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

**PURPOSE: CHANGES TO THE CPS INTAKE/ASSESSMENT AND IN-HOME POLICY MANUALS AND
GUIDANCE ON SAFETY CIRCLES FOR SAFETY NETWORK DEVELOPMENT**

SUBJECT: CHANGES TO THE CPS MANUALS AND SAFETY NETWORK DEVELOPMENT

REQUIRED ACTION: Information Only Time Sensitive Immediate

The Division is committed to providing counties with protocol and guidance to support compliance with the law and best practice of child welfare services. There have been several changes to the law regarding child welfare during the 2021 legislative season. All of the law changes have gone into effect. In an effort to ensure continuity and accuracy, the policy changes will be provided in phases as each one is reviewed and accepted. Policy changes are being reviewed and edited by the respective design teams responsible for that section of policy, Unified Leadership Team, and Division leadership. As each section is approved it will be posted and presented to the county child welfare agencies.

The first phase of the revised manual changes includes:

- **CPS Intake Policy, Protocol, and Guidance:**
 - The addition of a relative definition,
 - A statutorily edited neglect definition to include the refusal of a parent to follow recommendations of the Juvenile and Family Team,
 - The requirement to identify relatives during information gathering,
 - Alignment of protocol with the **Child Welfare Resources for Substance Affected Infants and Plan of Safe Care**,
 - Screening directions for the addition to the neglect definition.
- **CPS Family and Investigative Assessments:**
 - Removal of the Permanency Planning functions from the Required Timeframes (a link is included to the Permanency Planning manual),
 - The requirement to identify relatives and build a Safety Network using Safety Circles,
 - Correction from Care Coordination for Children (CC4C) to Care Management for At Risk Children (CMARC),

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LOCATION: 820 S. Boylan Avenue, McBryde Building, Raleigh, NC 27603
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- Alignment of protocol with the **Child Welfare Resources for Substance Affected Infants and Plan of Safe Care**,
- The addition of the Medication Assisted Treatment definition,
- The change to the Responsible Individual List notification requirement for non-caretakers.
- **In-Home Services Policy, Protocol, and Guidance**
 - Removal of the Permanency Planning functions from the Required Timeframes (a link is included to the Permanency Planning manual),
 - Inclusion of the review of the Plan of Safe Care at the initial family contact (to occur within seven days)
- **Child Welfare Resources on the use of Safety Circles to Build Safety Networks**
 - A guidance tool will be provided to assist workers in using Safety Circles as a tool to build Safety Networks that can support families in ensuring safety for children.

The additional protocol and guidance will provide workers with what must be done, how it should be done, and why it must be done for all the new statutory changes. There will be a subsequent Dear County Director Letter for each policy change phase to provide updates. Along with subsequent approved changes the next iteration will include changes to IV-E candidacy.

Next Steps

This policy has been published on the Division's web page at <https://policies.ncdhhs.gov/divisional/social-services/child-welfare/policy-manuals>. The policy changes will be presented at Children Services Committee on **December 8th**.

There will also be webinars to present the tools for Building a Safety Network to assist supervisors and workers. A link to register for the webinars is below. Webinars will be recorded for those who are unable to attend.

December 15th from 2pm-3:30pm: <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/6565908927033347597>

December 16th from 10am-12pm: <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/8847664935017371407>

If you have questions about this information, contact Amanda Hubbard at amanda.hubbard@dhhs.nc.gov.

Sincerely,



Kathy Stone

Section Chief for Safety and Prevention
North Carolina Division of Social Services

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

CWS-43-2021

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