



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

**ROY COOPER** • Governor

**KODY H. KINSLEY** • Secretary

**SUSAN OSBORNE** • Assistant Secretary for County  
Operations for Human Services

May 5, 2022

**DEAR COUNTY DIRECTORS OF SOCIAL SERVICES**

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

**SUBJECT: *May is National Foster Care Month***

**REQUIRED ACTION:**  Information Only  Time Sensitive  Immediate

Governor Roy Cooper has proclaimed May as Foster Care Month for our State. North Carolina Division of Social Services (NCDSS) would like to express our sincere appreciation and gratitude for Governor Cooper's time and his commitment to the children, youth, and families of North Carolina.

NCDSS is excited to celebrate all families that have opened their homes and hearts to foster care. We are also dedicated to the diligent recruitment and retention of prospective foster families across North Carolina. This year NCDSS is using Foster Care Month to provide ongoing support for the work you do each day to provide a safe and secure home for children and youth who are in foster care. NCDSS is committed to providing resources that can be accessed by county DSS and private agency staff.

**National Foster Care Month Website** (<https://www.childwelfare.gov/fostercaremonth>): The Children's Bureau recognizes and acknowledges the important roles that impact our children, youth, and families. This year's theme is **"Relative and Kin Connections: Keeping Families Strong"** which emphasizes the significance of positive connections and maintaining family and cultural ties. The Children's Bureau, in collaboration with its information services, Child Welfare Information Gateway, provides resources and information to assist in ensuring a positive future for our children and youth in foster care. Resources include, but are not limited to, outreach materials, inspirational stories through Reflections, and a community engagement page.

**Fostering NC** ([fosteringnc.org](http://fosteringnc.org)) is a learning site for North Carolina's foster and adoptive families and kinship caregivers. This site features on-demand courses, webinars, videos, resources, and answers to foster, adoptive, and kinship caregivers' frequently asked questions. NCDSS, in partnership with UNC-Chapel Hill, NC State University, and Independent Living Resources, will maintain and update the learning site with additional resources and trainings on a regular basis.

**Fostering Perspectives** ([www.fosteringperspectives.org](http://www.fosteringperspectives.org)) is a free newsletter produced by NCDSS in partnership with the UNC-Chapel Hill School of Social Work. It is published twice a year and the intended

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audience is foster, adoptive, kinship, and therapeutic families as well as child welfare professionals in North Carolina. Each issue advances diligent recruitment efforts by regularly featuring waiting children and offering information that supports the educational needs of existing foster families.

**NC's Permanency Innovation Initiative (PII)** is an effort launched in 2013 by NC's General Assembly. Under this state-sponsored initiative, a private child-placing agency, Children's Home Society of North Carolina (CHS), provides services to improve permanency outcomes for children living in foster care. These services include improving engagement with biological relatives and reducing costs associated with maintaining children in foster care. CHS has achieved positive outcomes for children and families through child specific adoption recruitment and permanency related training.

The **Adoption Promotion Program Fund** is utilized to enhance and expand adoption programs, to secure permanent homes for hard to place children, and to encourage partnerships between public and private agencies to achieve permanency for children in a timely manner by providing financial incentives for the adoption of special needs children. Allowable expenditures of the funds received include direct provision or purchase by contract of general services and child specific adoption recruitment, retention, and promotion services.

**Permanency Matters Webinars** will be held throughout 2022. Stay apprised of upcoming dates through *NC Blueprint*. Previous recorded Permanency Matters Webinars can be accessed at: <https://www.ncdhhs.gov/divisions/social-services/publications>.

**Kinship First Webinar:** The webinar was conducted in March 2022. During the webinar, agencies were provided with current information pertaining to our kinship vision, licensing, and the Kinship Fit and Feasibility Study. The webinar can be accessed at <https://www.ncdhhs.gov/divisions/social-services/publications>.

**Technical assistance regarding County Diligent Recruitment and Retention Plans** is available. Each County is required to write and implement a structured Diligent Recruitment and Retention Plan. For more information, please contact Jodi Franck at [jodi.franck@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:jodi.franck@dhhs.nc.gov).

**Technical assistance regarding the NC Kids Program and Child Specific Recruitment** is available. All children with a plan of adoption must be registered with NC Kids within 30 days of becoming legally free unless an exemption is granted by the North Carolina Division of Social Services. For more information, please contact your NC Kids Consultant or email [nc.kids@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:nc.kids@dhhs.nc.gov).

**Technical assistance regarding policy through Office Hours.** Office Hours provides an opportunity for thoughtful and open discussion regarding policy and practice and for any questions to be answered accordingly. Office Hours will be held on May 26<sup>th</sup> and June 23<sup>rd</sup>. Recordings of previous sessions can be accessed at <https://www.ncdhhs.gov/divisions/social-services/county-staff-information/policy-office-hours>. Please reach out to Margaret "Scotty" Knight at [margaret.knight@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:margaret.knight@dhhs.nc.gov) for additional information.

Included with this communication, please find the following recruitment and retention informational items:

1. Proclamation from Governor Roy Cooper declaring May to be Foster Care Awareness Month
2. Caring For Our Own (CFOO) Flyer

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3. KinGap: Fact Sheet for Child Welfare Professionals
4. KinGap: Informational Flyer for Caregivers
5. NC Kids Information Guide

Thank you for your continued support of kinship families. Should you have any questions, please contact the State Permanency Coordinator Mary Mackins at [Mary.Mackins@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:Mary.Mackins@dhhs.nc.gov).

Sincerely,

*Carla McNeill*

Carla McNeill  
Section Chief for Permanency Planning  
Division of Social Services, Child Welfare  
North Carolina Department of Health and  
Human Services

Cc: Susan Osborne, Assistant Secretary for County Operations  
Lisa T. Cauley, Senior Director of Child, Family and Adult Services  
Adrian Daye, Deputy Director for Child Welfare Practice  
Tammy Shook, Interim Deputy Director for Operations  
Kathy Stone, Section Chief for Child Protective Services and Prevention  
Kimaree Sanders, Interim Section Chief for Licensing and Regulatory

Attachments:

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