



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 7, 2021

DEAR COUNTY DIRECTORS OF SOCIAL SERVICES

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

SUBJECT: PERMANENCY PLANNING POLICY UPDATES

REQUIRED ACTION: Information Only Time Sensitive Immediate

PURPOSE: NOTIFICATION OF PERMANENCY PLANNING POLICY UPDATES

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 the law changes have gone into effect and the policy is effective immediately. The policy was published December 6th, 2021, on the Division's web page at <https://policies.ncdhhs.gov/divisional/social-services/child-welfare/policy-manuals>.

The revised manual changes include:

- **Permanency Planning:**
 - The addition of a relative definition
 - The requirement to identify and notify relatives and other persons with legal custody of a sibling for a juvenile in nonsecure custody within 30 days of the initial removal
 - The requirement of the court to consider non-relative kin, including an appropriate former foster parent or legal custodian of a sibling, for placement of a juvenile
 - Sibling placement and sibling visitation requirements
 - Observation requirements before a recommendation of unsupervised visitation
 - Visitation requirements when parents or caregivers have positive drug screen results
 - Creation of separate tracks for review and permanency planning hearings. When a juvenile has been removed from the custody of a parent, guardian, or custodian and is not returned at initial disposition, the track is permanency planning
 - Caregiver's opportunity to address the court regarding a juvenile's well-being
 - Concurrent planning for Post TPR Review Hearings

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

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www.ncdhhs.gov • TEL: 919-527-6390 • FAX: 919-733-3052

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- Requirements that must be presented to the court for 17-year-old juveniles
- Termination process for the 18-21 agreement
- Requirements for Care Review Teams and Juvenile Consultation Meetings with the Department of Juvenile Justice

- **Interstate/Intercounty Services for Children:**
 - The legislative changes repealed N.C.G.S. 7B-3807 where the ICPC regulations do not have the effect of law, but the ICPC program remains intact. This policy has no further updates or changes.

- **Next Steps:**
 - There are upcoming webinars to discuss the policy changes 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 17th from 10:00am-11am: <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/1650450935730111501>

December 17th from 1:00pm-2pm: <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/3628207371796850188>

If you have any questions about the policy updates or webinars, please contact Margaret Knight at margaret.knight@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 Cauley, Senior Director of Child, Family and Adult Services
 Teresa Strom, Section Chief for County Operations
 Kathy Stone, Section Chief for Child Protective Services and Prevention
 Linda Waite, Section Chief for Licensing and Regulatory

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