

PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT PLAN REQUIREMENTS

- A. A county shall be placed in Program Improvement status either as a result of issues raised at a Child and Family review or issues that arise from practice concerns that are identified separate from the Child and Family review process.
1. A Program Improvement Plan will be required when a county fails to achieve substantial conformity in one or more outcome areas of the Child and Family review.
 2. A Program Improvement Plan may be required when practice concerns have been identified to the agency and have not been adequately addressed in a timely manner.
- B. All Program Improvement Plans shall be submitted in writing to the Team Leader, Local Operations within 45 calendar days of written notification that one is required (generally submitted by e-mail as a draft to counties). Since all Program Improvement Plans must be reviewed by the assigned Children's Program Representative (CPR) before the plan is submitted to the Children's Services Section, they should therefore should be sent to the CPR within 30 days of notification that a plan is required. The CPR will provide feedback to the counties and suggest additional information if such is indicated. Once the agency submits the plan to the Division, they will receive a response within 15 calendar days.
- C. Program Improvement Plans will be reviewed at least quarterly. The first review occurs 90 days from the date of the approval of the plan. (However, if there is undue delay in a county submitting a plan, the review of progress may occur earlier than 90 days from approval of the plan). If the county remains in PIP status, progress reports will occur at least quarterly thereafter.
1. The first review may involve a formal record review and/or other types of assessments that cover the steps the county has taken toward the necessary improvements.
 2. The county will be required to report on their goal achievement in reference to the PIP quarterly, as long as they are in PIP status. These reports may be as a result of a case review conducted by the CPR and the county, or an assessment of the progress submitted by the county that details how they determined their progress and reviewed by the CPR.
 3. The CPR will provide a written recommendation to the Team Leader, Local Operations, regarding continuation or removal from PIP status.
 4. The county will be notified of their PIP status within 15 days of receipt of the county's report and the CPRs recommendation. Counties who

successfully achieve the goals of their PIP can expect to be removed from PIP status.

D. When a county fails to make timely progress on their PIP, the Division may begin to follow the statutory steps as outlined in N.C.G.S 108A-74. Prior to that point a county may be offered the assistance of the Special Assistance and Improvement Team (SAIT). Counties requesting SAIT involvement will be asked to provide an explanation/rationale of how SAIT will be able to help them achieve their PIP goals and will be expected to cooperate with SAIT in developing and implementing a plan for assistance and improvement. In some instances SAIT will be sent by the Division to evaluate a county's present status when there are serious concerns about practice, legal or policy compliance. This may be done as a first step of GS 108A-74. If a county has failed to make progress, does not request or want the assistance of SAIT, then a contact will be made with the DSS Board who will be apprised of the Divisions' continuing concerns.

E. All correspondence from Raleigh that is directed to the county around the Program Improvement Plan will be copied to all of the people who would regularly or ordinarily get a copy of the Child and Family Services Review report. These people will receive correspondence about PIP whether the county was placed in this status as a result of a Child and Family Services Review or another reason relating to practice or policy compliance concerns.