



North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services
Division of Social Services

325 North Salisbury Street • Raleigh, North Carolina 27603
Courier # 56-20-25

Michael F. Easley, Governor
Carmen Hooker Buell, Secretary

Pheon E. Beal, Director
(919) 733-3055

July 25, 2001

Dear County Director of Social Services

Attention: Child Welfare Staff

Subject: Challenge for Children Training Opportunity

The Division is pleased to announce that ninety (95) counties accepted the **Challenge for Children** for 2001. The Division is extending an invitation to all **Challenge for Children** Counties to attend a day of training on **Monday, August 20, 2001**. The training event will begin with registration at 8:00 A.M. and end at approximately 4:00 PM. The training event will be held in the Teaching Auditorium at the **Rowan-Cabarrus Community College**. This campus is located in Salisbury, North Carolina. Directions to this community college are as follows: Traveling south on I-85, take the Jake Alexander Boulevard exit, make a left and **Rowan-Cabarrus Community College** will be on your right, after crossing over I-85. Traveling north on I-85 take the Jake Alexander Boulevard exit and turn right. The Teaching Auditorium is in Building 500, which is located between the Richard Brownell Building and Building 100. Two large parking lots on campus offer free parking. Lunch will be "on your own."

The agenda for this training will be dedicated to the Family to Family (FTF) project. A brief overview of the FTF project is on the backside of this letter. Judith Goodhand, with the Annie E. Casey Foundation will begin the training day with brief dialogue about the FTF project in North Carolina. Denise Goodman, Ph.D., an expert in the area of recruiting and retaining foster and adoptive parents, will complete the agenda by addressing these issues and offering techniques that social workers may use to enhance child safety and well being. This interactive workshop will allow Dr. Goodman an opportunity to respond to questions and comments from participants.

Thank you for the hard work you do on behalf of the children of North Carolina. The Division is receptive to your ideas and thoughts about improving the state of the child in North Carolina. The registration form for this workshop is included with this letter. The registration deadline is

August 10, 2001. Registrations may be mailed or faxed to Phyllis Fulton. The mailing address is 325 N. Salisbury Street, MSC 2408, Raleigh, NC 27699-2408. The fax number is 919-715-6714. Ms. Fulton's email address is phyllis.fulton@ncmail.net.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Charles C. Harris".

Charles C. Harris, Chief
Children's Services Section

cc: Pheon E. Beal
Children Program Representatives
Children's Services Team Leaders
Local Business Liaisons

Family to Family (FTF) Overview

Background: The Current Challenges of Public Child Welfare

The nation's child welfare system faces a series of daunting challenges:

- The number of children in the care of the child welfare system has continued to grow -- from 260,000 children in out-of-home care in the 1980s to more than 550,000 in care by 2000.
- As child welfare systems became overloaded, they were unable to safely return children to their families or to find permanent homes for them. Children have therefore experienced much longer stays in temporary settings.
- At the same time, the number of foster families nationally has dropped, so that fewer than 50 percent of the children needing temporary care are now placed with foster families. As a result of this disparity, child welfare agencies in many urban communities have placed large numbers of children in group care or with relatives who have great difficulty caring for them. An infant coming into care in our largest cities has a good chance of being placed in group care, and may be without a permanent family for years.
- Finally, children of color are vastly over-represented in this group of disadvantaged children.

The Casey Foundation's interest in helping communities and public agencies confront these challenges is built upon the belief that smarter and more effective responses are available to prevent child maltreatment and to respond more effectively when there is abuse or neglect. Often families can be helped to safely care for their children in their own communities and in their own homes -- if appropriate support, guidance, and help is provided to them early enough. However, there are emergency situations that require the separation of a child from his or her family. At such times, every effort should be made to have the child live with caring and capable relatives or with another family within the child's own community -- rather than in a restrictive institutional setting. Family foster care should be the next best alternative to a child's own home or to kinship care.

A Response to the Challenge: The Family to Family Initiative

With the appropriate reforms in policy, resources, and programs, family foster care can respond to the challenges of out-of-home placement and be a less expensive and more humane choice for children and youth than are institutions or other group settings. Family foster care reform, in and of itself, can yield important benefits for families and children -- although such reform is only one part of a larger agenda designed to address the overall well-being of children and families currently in need of child protective services.

Family to Family was designed in 1992 and has now been field tested in communities across the country, including Alabama, New Mexico, Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Maryland. Los Angeles County is in the early stages of implementation of the initiative. New York City has also adopted the neighborhood and family-centered principles of **Family to Family** as an integral part of its reform effort. New sites in the process of joining **Family to Family** include Illinois, San Francisco, Oregon, Kentucky, Michigan, North Carolina, Colorado, and Santa Clara County, CA.

The **Family to Family Initiative** provides an opportunity for states and communities to reconceptualize, redesign, and reconstruct their foster care system to achieve the following new system-wide goals:

1. To develop a network of family foster care that is more neighborhood-based, culturally sensitive, and located primarily in the communities in which the children live.
2. To assure that scarce family foster home resources are provided to all those children (but to only those children) who in fact must be removed from their homes.
3. To reduce reliance on institutional or congregate care (in shelters, hospitals, psychiatric centers, correctional facilities, residential treatment programs, and group homes) -- by meeting the needs of many more of the children currently in those settings through relative or family foster care.
4. To increase the number and quality of foster families to meet projected needs.
5. To reunify children with their families as soon as that can safely be accomplished, based on the family's and children's needs -- not simply the system's time frames.
6. To reduce the lengths of stay of children in out-of-home care.
7. To better screen children being considered for removal from home, and to determine what services might be provided to safely preserve the family.
8. To decrease the overall number of children coming into out-of-home care.

9. To involve foster families as team members in family reunification efforts.
10. To become a neighborhood resource for children and families and invest in the capacity of communities from which the foster care population comes

Challenge For Children Training Event

August 20, 2001

Rowan-Cabarrus Community College

Salisbury, NC

REGISTRATION FORM

PLEASE TYPE*

***OFTEN FAX MACHINES SMEAR WORDS MAKING HANDWRITTEN WORDS DIFFICULT TO READ. IF NAMES CANNOT BE TYPED, PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY.**

COUNTY _____

FIRST NAME	LAST NAME	ADDRESS	CITY	COURIER #	TELEPHONE # & FAX#	POSITION

PLEASE FAX OR MAIL YOUR REGISTRATION NO LATER THAN AUGUST 10, 2001 TO:

PHYLLIS FULTON
DHHS, DSS
CHILDREN'S SERVICES SECTION
POLICY & INTITATIVE TEAM
325 N. SALISBURY STREET, SUITE 756
2408 MAIL SERVICES CENTER
RALEIGH, NC 27699-2408
FAX # 919-715-6714

YOU WILL RECEIVE A CONFIRMATION LETTER UPON RECEIPT OF YOUR REGISTRATION FORM