

CPS FOSTER CARE SERVICES REVIEW TOOL REFERENCE GUIDE
1201 Child Placement Services

Foster care placement is **temporary substitute care** provided to a child who must be separated from his or her own parents or caretakers when the parents or caretakers are unable or unwilling to provide adequate protection and care. A child in foster care is a child for whom a licensed public or private child-placing agency has legal custody and/or placement responsibility, whether or not he/she has been removed from his/her home.

****If the county uses electronic documentation system that does not allow state forms to be used then they need to have all of the items from the form must be in the system.****

Unless otherwise noted, policy in this section can be found at:
<http://info.dhhs.state.nc.us/olm/manuals/dss/csm-10/man/>

Pre Placement	Was the child already in a safety placement?	...		
	Was a CFT held prior to custody?	<p>When it appears that placement out of the home may become necessary to protect the child, the social worker responsible for services to the family shall seek the consultation of other agency staff and the supervisor, unless an emergency situation exists that threatens the child's safety. Such a decision is one that requires more than one point of view. At a minimum, social workers shall seek the approval of their supervisor before removing a child from his/her home. For many agencies, the use of a screening team or multi-disciplinary team is an effective structure for making such decisions. Multiple Response and System of care has taught us that whenever possible, the family's support network should be involved in determining resources within the family who can help to stabilize the family or who can provide appropriate care for the child. A Child and Family Team (CFT) meeting may be used effectively to make decisions regarding removal.</p> <p>http://info.dhhs.state.nc.us/olm/manuals/dss/csm-10/man/CSs1201c4-02.htm</p> <p>A CFT meeting shall be held during an assessment if it appears that the child/ren and youth may need to be removed during the assessment period. A CFT meeting shall be held to explore other safety arrangements and possible placements if the child/ren and youth must be removed. If holding a CFT meeting would compromise the safety of the child, then the child shall be made safe through the filing of a non-secure petition and a CFT shall be held as soon as possible after the removal to begin planning for permanency.</p> <p>http://info.dhhs.state.nc.us/olm/manuals/dss/csm-55/man/CSVII.pdf</p>		
	Kin	Were kin and/or safety resources involved with planning and decision making?	For information regarding this best practice see: http://info.dhhs.state.nc.us/olm/manuals/dss/csm-10/man/CSs1201cYP.pdf p. 14	
		If kin were considered for placement, were they fully informed of the plan options and their rights as caretakers?	This includes informing them of their right to be licensed and receive foster care benefits for the children.	
	Native American/ ICWA DSS-5335, 5336	Was Native American heritage assessed?	For all cases "Substantiated" or found to be "In Need of Services" the CPS Assessment worker shall inquire about a parent/caretaker's Indian ancestry. The DSS-5335 and the DSS-5336 require social workers to ask questions about state, as well as federal tribal ancestry. If found after the placement was made/after assessment this is considered an error. http://info.dhhs.state.nc.us/olm/manuals/dss/csm-05/man/CWS_AL_03-11.htm#P16_236	
		Was the tribe contacted at the time of the decision to petition?	The DSS-5335 will be filled out with a parent/caretaker who has indicated that he/she has heritage in an Indian tribe. The DSS-5336 will be used when the parent/caretaker is either absent or unwilling to cooperate with the agency <i>and</i> the agency has collateral information that the child(ren) may have heritage in an Indian tribe. A separate form should be used with each parent/caretaker in the case. IMPORTANT: One of these two forms is to be used in every Substantiated case or case found to be In Need of Services where DSS has received information (either directly from a parent/caretaker/relative or from a collateral source, such as a teacher, doctor, or therapist) that the child(ren) may have American	

		Indian ancestry, whether in a federally or state recognized tribe. http://info.dhhs.state.nc.us/olm/manuals/dss/csm-05/man/CWS_AL_03-11.htm#P16_236
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Legal Work	Did the child come into custody through	Non Secure Custody	
		Compliance Petition	
		DJJ	
		Civil Court	
	Other		
	Does the initial custody order include:	Contrary or best interest language AOC-J-150, #4	For title IV-E purposes, in a court-ordered removal there must be a judicial determination to the effect that continuation in the home with the specified relative (from whom there was a physical or constructive removal) would be contrary to the child's welfare, or that foster care placement is in the child's best interests. Title IV-E Foster Care Eligibility On-Site Review Instrument and Instructions
		Reasonable efforts language AOC-J-150, #1	For title IV-E purposes, a judicial removal must include a determination to the effect that the title IV-E agency has made reasonable efforts to prevent the removal of the child from the specified relative or that reasonable efforts are not necessary prior to removal. Title IV-E Foster Care Eligibility On-Site Review Instrument and Instructions http://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/cb/title_iv_e_instrument.pdf
	If there was a petition, was it signed by the petitioner?		

Initial Placement	Type	Home	
		Relative/Non Removal Parent/Kin	
		Licensed Foster Home	
		Congregate care	Generally this includes: Group homes, residential treatment facilities, psychiatric institutions and emergency shelters
		Other	i.e. Hospitals and jails
	Did the placement allow the child to:	Remain in the same school in the child's community	
		keep contact with parents and relatives	
		be placed with siblings	
		keep contact with siblings	
		participate in faith of choice	
		be in unlicensed home with court sanction	
		maintain therapeutic contacts	
		minimize trauma without further moves	
		participate in activities prior to placement	
Fostering Connections	Was the family notified within 30 days of the child coming into care as per Fostering Connections?	Forms/Letters that meet all requirements of policy include: DSS-5316, 5317, 5318. These forms are not required, but the information contained in them must be in the record somewhere per fostering connections act.	
	If relatives expressed an interest in being involved with the foster child, is there follow up?	When the decision has been made to remove a child from parental custody, federal law, (Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008, P.L. 110-351) requires agencies to exercise due diligence to notify all close adult relatives of a child (including any other adult relatives suggested by the parents) within 30 days of the child's removal from the parent, of their options to	

			participate in the care and placement of the child.
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Initial Placement (cont)	Was a face to face contact made to the child and contact with the placement resource within 7 days of placement?	<p>The social worker shall have face-to-face contact with the child at least once within the first week of initial and subsequent placements. However, a telephone call or visit to the foster parent the day after placement provides reassurance to the child and the foster care provider.</p> <p>In addition, the child's social worker shall make contact with the foster parent at least once during the first week of placement. http://info.dhhs.state.nc.us/olm/manuals/dss/csm-10/man/CSs1201c5-05.htm#TopOfPage</p>		
	Was a medical appointment scheduled within 7 days of custody?	<p>A child must have a physical examination scheduled within seven days of the date of placement. Social workers shall also schedule dental, developmental, psychological, and educational assessments, when needed, within one week from the identification of the need. http://info.dhhs.state.nc.us/olm/manuals/dss/csm-10/man/CSs1201c5-05.htm#P121_22341</p> <p>Form DSS-5244 should be used with the physical examination</p>		
	Was the placement resource provided	Health Services Component Medical Information	<p>When a child is placed out of his/her home, information about the child's medical needs, medication, any special conditions, and instructions for care should be given to the foster parent prior to or at the time of placement. The social worker is responsible for bringing any medications, glasses, hearing aids, etc. to the foster care placement with the child. Social workers should document in the record when these items are given to the foster care placement providers. The Child Health Status Component (DSS-5243) shall be completed within seven days of initial placement and a copy shall be provided to the foster parents. http://info.dhhs.state.nc.us/olm/manuals/dss/csm-10/man/CSs1201c5-05.htm#TopOfPage</p>	
		Visitation Plan Copy of the service agreement	<p>If the placement resource is a participant in the Services Agreement and visitation plan, they should receive a copy of the plans. There must be some indication that the placement resource was at a minimum made aware of visitation arrangements.</p>	
		Education Status	<p>Completion of the Child Education Status Component (DSS-5245) is required within seven days of placement and a copy shall be provided to the foster parents. However, it is more helpful if that information can be given to the foster parent at the time of the placement in order to facilitate enrolling the child in school. http://info.dhhs.state.nc.us/olm/manuals/dss/csm-10/man/CSs1201c5-05.htm#TopOfPage</p>	

	Shared Parenting	Was there a shared parenting meeting between the parent and placement resource within 7 days of custody?	A social worker should facilitate an initial shared parenting meeting as soon as possible but no later than 7 days after a child's placement out of the home to ensure that the partnership has a strong beginning and is supported by the DSS. Subsequent initial shared parenting meetings should be held within 7 days if the child is moved to another placement. Document if there is a family reason that prevents this meeting from taking place within the initial 7 day period. One example would be that the social worker could not convene a shared parenting meeting because the birth parents could not be located. For additional details regarding shared parenting meeting go to link: http://info.dhhs.state.nc.us/olm/manuals/dss/csm-10/man/CSs1201c11-03.htm#TopOfPage
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Kinship Care	Is there a kinship care assessment completed and signed by the kinship care provider prior to placement?	... DSS-5202, 5203, 5204
	Were criminal record checks made on all adults residing in the kinship care home?	A criminal record check must be performed on possible kinship providers. If the social worker has conducted assessments of the relevant family members, the child may be placed with a relative. http://info.dhhs.state.nc.us/olm/manuals/dss/csm-60/man/pdf%20docs/CS1412.pdf p.33
	Was a home visit made to the kinship care home prior to placement?	An assessment must be conducted prior to placement both to evaluate the relative's ability and their willingness to provide a temporary and/or permanent placement for the child. An evaluation must be done to determine if the placement is in the child's best interest. http://info.dhhs.state.nc.us/olm/manuals/dss/csm-60/man/pdf%20docs/CS1412.pdf p.34
	Were relatives or kin given an opportunity to be licensed?	
	Was a comprehensive kinship care assessment been completed on the safety resource?	When placement with a relative or other kin is being explored, the agency is required to assess the suitability of that home. The Kinship Care Assessment packets are recommended for use in situations such as: Foster Care Services; child has been living with relative for six months or more, in agency custody for at least one year; neither reunification nor adoption is a suitable option; the placement is stable, and continuation of the placement is in the juvenile's best interest. The Face Sheet and Comprehensive Assessment for Guardianship forms to be completed. Note: If the family has never been assessed, this form combines the Initial and comprehensive Kinship Care Assessments and replaces those two forms. If the Initial and Comprehensive Kinship Care Assessments have been previously completed, only the mandated requirements listed in the adjacent column would be needed to complete the assessment. http://info.dhhs.state.nc.us/olm/forms/dss/dss-5204ins.pdf

	Have the following documents or activities been completed, reviewed, updated and provided	Parent Visitation Plan DSS-5242	The agency shall develop a Visitation and Contact Plan (dss-5242), as part of the Family Services Agreement, with each parent that specifies at least the frequency and location of visits. Visitation plans are required until the court orders termination of visitation or termination of parental rights. The Visitation Plan should be signed by the parents. If the parents refuse to sign, the social worker shall document their refusal on the form. If parents will not be visiting together, a separate Visitation and Contact Plan must be established with each parent. In any instance in which there are circumstances that necessitate a change in the Visitation Plan, the parents must be notified and a new agreement developed with them. Visitation Plans should be addressed in every court hearing and reflected in every court order, particularly when unsupervised visits are considered.
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Planning and Documentation	as per policy:		http://info.dhhs.state.nc.us/olm/manuals/dss/csm-10/man/CSs1201c5-10.htm#TopOfPage
		Sibling Visitation Agreement DSS-5242	Within one week of placement, a visitation plan for siblings to visit each other shall be developed and placed in the record. A signed sibling visitation plan shall be current at all times. Whenever circumstances warrant a change in visitation, a new visitation plan will be developed within 7 days. http://info.dhhs.state.nc.us/olm/manuals/dss/csm-10/man/CSs1201c5-07.htm
		Health Status Component DSS-5243	The health component shall be completed within seven days of a child's initial placement and subsequent placements and updated at least every 6 months or when circumstances change and is designed to coincide with updates of the Out of Home Family Services Agreement. Documentation shall reflect dates the revisions were made and the information was given to the placement providers. The third page of the Health Status Component is a recommended Child Physical Examination form to be completed by physicians each time the child is seen. Social workers should maintain these completed forms in the child's record and provide copies to the placement providers and each new physician serving the child. http://info.dhhs.state.nc.us/olm/manuals/dss/csm-10/man/CSs1201c2-02.htm#TopOfPage
		Educational Status Component DSS-5245	The education component shall be completed for all children grades K-12 within seven days of a child's initial placement and subsequent placements and updated at least every 6 months or when circumstances change and is designed to coincide with updates of the Out of Home Family Services Agreement. Documentation shall reflect dates the revisions were made and the information was given to the placement providers. Copies of school records should be given to the parent/custodian when permanency is achieved. http://info.dhhs.state.nc.us/olm/manuals/dss/csm-10/man/CSs1201c2-02.htm#TopOfPage
		Strengths and Needs Assessment DSS-5229	The FASN shall be completed with all cases where the case decision was made to provide Out-of-Home Services prior to completing the Family Services Agreement. In CPS Out-of-Home Services, the FASN shall track with the required scheduled Permanency Planning Action Team meetings. The assessment shall also be completed within 30 days prior to any court hearing or review. A parent that has been described as absent or noncustodial should be engaged to become involved with the planning of their child. Complete a FASN with that parent within the same time frames (If reviews are held frequently, documentation on the FASN form may state that there have been no changes since the last update and that the current information is correct.). The FASN shall be completed when the agency has legal custody and the child has been placed back in the home for a trial home visit and a Permanency Planning Action Team meeting falls within that trial home visit period. http://info.dhhs.state.nc.us/olm/forms/dss/DSS-5229-ia.pdf
		Family Reunification Assessment DSS-5227	The Family Reunification Assessment shall be completed when the agency holds legal custody and at least one child is in placement with a goal of return home (reunification). The assessment shall be completed: to track with the required scheduled Permanency Planning Action Team meetings; prior to any trial visit; prior to any time the child is being considered for a return home; and within 30 days prior to any court hearing or review. (If reviews are held frequently, documentation on the Family Reunification Assessment form may state that there have been no changes since the last update and that the current information is correct). http://info.dhhs.state.nc.us/olm/forms/dss/DSS-5227-ia.pdf

Have the following documents or activities been completed, reviewed, updated and provided as per policy: (cont)

Planning and Documentation (cont)	Have the following documents or activities been completed, reviewed, updated and provided as per policy: (cont)	Permanency Planning Action Team Meeting DSS-5241	<p>The case of every child in the custody or placement responsibility of a county department of social serves shall be reviewed by a Permanency Planning Action Team and documented on the Family Services Agreement Review (dss-5241). While these teams are needed to review agency decisions, they are also responsible for ensuring that every foster care case moves quickly toward a permanent resolution. Permanency Planning Action Team reviews are required at the following intervals: within 60 days of the child coming into agency custody or placement responsibility; within 90 days of the first agency team review, but no more than 150 days of the child coming into agency custody or placement responsibility; and every six months thereafter. To ensure that the nature of the action team is objective, it shall be conducted by a team which includes at least one person who does not have responsibility for services to the child or his family, and no responsibility for case management. Participants who shall be invited to the permanency Planning Action Team include (but are not limited to) the following: the child's parent(s), unless parental rights have been terminated; the child (when age appropriate, 12 or older invited); the foster parents/caregivers/adoptive parents; community resource persons, at least one of whom is not responsible for the case management or delivery of services to the child or parents; and the Guardian ad Litem. The agency must notify the parent(s) of: their right to attend and the opportunity to be heard at the action team meetings; The dates and locations of the meetings; and The right to have their attorneys with them at these meetings. Notification to parents and other required participants should be documented in the case record and signatures of all persons attending the action team meeting shall be recorded on the Family Services Agreement Review. Children who are old enough and of sufficient maturity shall be invited to participate in reviews of their cases http://info.dhhs.state.nc.us/olm/manuals/dss/csm-10/man/CSs1201c8-01.htm#TopOfPage http://info.dhhs.state.nc.us/olm/manuals/dss/csm-10/man/CSs1201c8-03.htm#TopOfPage http://info.dhhs.state.nc.us/olm/manuals/dss/csm-10/man/CSs1201c8-04.htm#TopOfPage</p> <p>If PPAT is held during the calendar month it is due, mark "Yes"</p>
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Planning and Documentation (cont)	CFT's	<p>A CFT meeting shall be held at the following times after coming into care:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Within 30 days of coming into care Within 60 days of coming into care Within 90 days after 60 day meeting, not more than 150 days after coming into care Every 6 months thereafter throughout the life of the case <p>When there is a change in the plan or family circumstance and it is necessary to reconvene the team to discuss progress http://info.dhhs.state.nc.us/olm/manuals/dss/csm-55/man/CSVII.pdf p.8</p> <p>The documentation of the CFT meeting is as important as the meeting itself. While the plan that comes out of the meeting should be documented on the Family Services Agreement, the process of the CFT meeting should also be documented in the case record. The following are the areas that need to be captured:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •The introduction of CFT meeting to the family. When and how CFT meetings were explained to the family; •The development of the team members. During discussions with the family about the CFT meeting process how did the family and social worker work together to identify possible team members? Were there disagreements, and if so, how were they resolved? The identification of each team member shall be recorded in the documentation along with their relationship to the family; •How the child/youth's level of participation and input was determined shall be clearly documented in the case record; How absent parents were involved and their subsequent level of participation shall be clearly documented in the case record. If the absent parent did not participate due to safety concerns, those shall also be clearly and objectively documented; •The preparation of all team members. It is important to document that all team members were prepared by having their role explained, the focus of the meeting discussed, and for family members, their ideas for how the meeting should look (for example: opening and closing rituals, food, where and when the meeting will be held); •The process of the actual meeting. While the meeting does not need to be documented word for word, there does need to be a good summary of what happened. It should be clear to anyone reading the documentation what the strengths of the family are, what each participant feels is the best way to address the issues before the team, and how decisions were made about what will actually be in the plan; •The plan for follow-up. How will team members know that the plan is being implemented accurately? Who will follow up and what will happen if the plan is not working? •When will the next meeting be held? •What worked and didn't work in the meeting and how will those issues be addressed in the next meeting in order to improve the meeting when necessary? •The team will answer these questions together. Documentation of the CFT meeting is not a one-time task. Instead the documentation should be ongoing from the first time the CFT meeting is introduced to the family through the completion of the meeting. For each subsequent meeting documentation must include the identification of any new team members, the development of the focus of the meeting, and the actual processes and outcomes of the meetings. Documentation of CFT Meetings shall be completed on the Child and Family Team Meeting Documentation Instrument http://info.dhhs.state.nc.us/olm/manuals/dss/csm-55/man/CSVII.pdf p.28
	Was a facilitator for CFT's used as prescribed in policy?	<p>A facilitator, who is neither the social worker for the family nor the supervisor of that social worker, shall be used in all cases with a current risk rating of high or intensive. Use of a neutral facilitator is best practice for all CFT meetings. While a facilitator is not required in moderate risk cases, it remains best practice as there are many benefits to a facilitated meeting. For a list of circumstances in which a facilitator might be especially helpful see link below http://info.dhhs.state.nc.us/olm/manuals/dss/csm-55/man/CSVII-04.htm#P358_53231</p>
	Emancipation Plan DSS-5315	<p>Fostering Connections Act of 2008 requires that within 90 days prior to a youth aging out of foster care custody at age 18, the agency shall develop a plan with the youth to discuss his or her plans for emancipation from agency custody. http://info.dhhs.state.nc.us/olm/manuals/dss/csm-10/man/CSs1201c7-07.htm#TopOfPage</p>

Planning and Documentation (cont)	Have the following documents or activities been completed, reviewed, updated and provided as per policy: (cont)	Transitional Living Plan	The Transitional Living Plan shall be developed no more than 30 days following the youth's 16th birthday and shall be updated at least every six months. This plan is jointly developed between the agency, youth, placement provider, youth supporters and others who are involved with the youth. It is based on the life skills assessment and directly targets those areas that need to be addressed before the youth becomes an adult. The Transitional Living Plan is supplemental and does not replace any other part of the plan. It is required by Federal law as well as state policy. http://info.dhhs.state.nc.us/olm/manuals/dss/csm-10/man/CSs1201c2-02.htm#TopOfPage With the youth, developing written individual transitional plans spelling out the responsibility of the agency and youth to accomplish a successful transition to self-sufficiency. Transitional plans are developed concurrently with the service agreements. Note: Youth 12 years and older have the legal right to be involved in the development of the service plans if they are cognitively and emotionally able to participate. http://info.dhhs.state.nc.us/olm/manuals/dss/csm-10/man/CSs1201c7.pdf p.22
		DSS-5120 & 5102A	In the case of IV-E and State Foster Home Funds, the child's eligibility should be evaluated at the time the child comes into care, whenever there is a change in circumstances and at periodic intervals thereafter, but no less than every 12 months. http://info.dhhs.state.nc.us/olm/manuals/dss/csm-78/man/Section%201500.htm#P14_416
		Placement Log	A log shall be maintained in each child's record which outlines the child's placement history. This log should contain a record of the child's prior placements with names of caregivers, addresses, dates of placement, and specific reasons for the move. Copies of required notifications to parents regarding a change in a child's placement must be included in the record. http://info.dhhs.state.nc.us/olm/manuals/dss/csm-10/man/CSs1201c10-03.htm#TopOfPage
	Services Agreement	Has the services agreement been signed by each person in attendance or documentation as to why they were not present or did not sign:	While parental wishes concerning who is invited or not invited shall be considered and respected, it is also important that the social worker use diligence in supporting the family as they expand the circle that will sustain them as wide as possible. A broad and comprehensive circle of support is more likely to keep the child/ren and youth and family safe. Widening the circle involves a great deal of skill in working with families who are reluctant or resistant. When parents or caregivers are reluctant to hold a family meeting, social workers must seek to understand what this reluctance is about and how the safety and comfort of the parents or caregivers can be achieved while still ensuring the presence of people critical to the lives of the child/ren and youth. Resistance could be due to lack of understanding. Generations of feeling disconnected and not trusting child welfare may present as anger or defensiveness. It should always be remembered that while this is the family's meeting, the general goal, is always the safety and well being of the child. As we work to widen the circle, the child's wishes must also be considered. Absent parents shall be involved in the CFT meeting unless there is a valid conflict or safety issue, and this must be clearly documented in the case record. The agency shall use alternate methods to involve the absent parent in Services Agreement if it is determined that the parent cannot participate in the CFT meeting due to a conflict or safety issue. http://info.dhhs.state.nc.us/olm/manuals/dss/csm-55/man/CSVII.pdf p.13
		Child	The Out-of-Home Family Services Agreement is completed jointly by the social worker, the parents/caretakers, the youth if 12 to 18 years of age, and other persons who are involved in and critical to the successful completion of the agreement and the safety and welfare of the children. http://info.dhhs.state.nc.us/olm/forms/dss/dss-5240ins.pdf
		Mother	
		Father	
		Removal Caretaker	
		Step Mother	
		Step Father	
Resource Mother			
Resource Father			
Other resources identified by the family			
Does the initial Out of Home Family Services Agreement (5240) address all the safety,	The Out of Home Family Services Agreement reflects both the strengths and needs of the child and family identified in the Family Assessment of Strengths and Needs and the Family Reunification Assessment. The Out of Home Family Services Agreement documents what must change in order for the parents to meet the needs of the child. The NC Case Decision Summary/Initial plan is effective until the Out of Home Family Services Agreement is completed jointly		

Planning and Documentation (cont)	Services Agreement (cont)	permanence and well-being needs of the child identified in risk assessments, other assessments, and the petition?	with the family (a maximum of 30 days.) If the Services Agreement does not address child safety, mark "no" http://info.dhhs.state.nc.us/olm/manuals/dss/csm-10/man/CSs1201c2-01.htm#P20_264 http://info.dhhs.state.nc.us/olm/manuals/dss/csm-10/man/CSs1201c2-02.htm#TopOfPage
		Was an Out of Home Family Services Agreement completed within 30 days of custody?	The Out of Home Family Services Agreement documents what must change in order for the parents to meet the needs of the child. The NC Case Decision Summary/Initial plan is effective until the Out of Home Family Services Agreement is completed jointly with the family (a maximum of 30 days.)
		Was the Out of Home Family Services Agreement reviewed regularly with the family during contacts with the family?	Out of Home Family Services Agreements are only valuable if they are current and relevant. Time frames for reviews are the maximum period of time between reviews. If major changes occur that effect the objectives or activities, a review should be scheduled and the plan updated as soon as possible. Documentation shall include the progress or lack of progress in meeting stated objectives and in accomplishing planned activities. (evidenced by notes on the case plan or noted in dictation) http://info.dhhs.state.nc.us/olm/manuals/dss/csm-10/man/CSs1201c2-06.htm#TopOfPage
		Were there specific actions by the agency to make "reasonable efforts" to support the Out of Home Family Services Agreement goals?	The caregiver should have input into decisions concerning who will be service providers, as needed. Also listed here should be the specific activities the social worker agrees to do to assist the family in successfully completing the agreement. This allows the family to see clearly that this is a team effort and they are not alone. If it only says the agency will monitor, answer "no."
		Was the Out of Home Family Services Agreement been updated when there were significant changes?	When there is a change in the plan or family circumstance and it is necessary to reconvene the team to discuss progress http://info.dhhs.state.nc.us/olm/manuals/dss/csm-55/man/CSVII.pdf p.8
		Was the Out of Home Family Services Agreement been reviewed in a CFT at least every 6 months?	Every 6 months thereafter throughout the life of the case
	Permanent Plan Goals	Was the permanent plan goal changed during the foster care episode?	
		Was the case plan goal changed as the result of a permanency hearing?	

		Was a concurrent plan identified?	Concurrent permanency planning is the process of working towards a primary permanent plan for a child, such as family reunification, while developing at least one alternative permanency plan at the same time. Concurrent permanency planning is used to keep the focus on the child's urgent needs for safety and permanence and to reduce the length of time a child spends in foster care. http://info.dhhs.state.nc.us/olm/manuals/dss/csm-10/man/CSs1201c6-04.htm#TopOfPage
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Data Maintenance	DSS-5094	Is the data on the placement log identical to Section VII & IX?	A current copy of the dss-5094 must be maintained in the case record (unless these forms are maintained centrally elsewhere in the agency). This form must be updated as required and whenever there are changes related to any field. Entries on this form are critical for accurate payments to caregivers. Furthermore, data is now being collected from other fields that are used for statistical analysis. This data is being used for the Children's Services Outcomes Reports for counties and for the Report on Experiences of Children Entering Child Welfare Custody in N.C. Data from county departments of social services is being scrutinized in identifying strengths in the child welfare system and areas for program improvement. The accuracy of data is critical in this analysis. Data is provided on request to the NC General Assembly, county commissioners, county managers, media, public officials, etc. http://info.dhhs.state.nc.us/olm/manuals/dss/csm-10/man/CSs1201c10-03.htm#TopOfPage
		Is the plan goal recorded in Section V consistent with the plan in the record?	
		Is the eligibility status in Field 55 consistent with the determination from the DSS-5120 or 5120A?	
	DSS-5106	Are visits with foster child recorded for each month?	Per Dear County Director Letter FSCWS-45-07, dated June 29, 2007 counties should begin entering data regarding monthly Social Worker visits with children in care for all children in care as of July 1, 2007. If not copied in the record, ask the county what the process is for entering this information. http://info.dhhs.state.nc.us/olm/manuals/dss/rim-05/adm/PM-REM-AL-0607.htm http://www.ncdhhs.gov/dss/dcdl/famsupchildwelfare/fscw-45-2007.pdf
	DSS-5027	Are the services and dates of services consistent with findings in the record?	The form is to be completed or updated each time a service is requested or terminated, when income eligibility is determined or redetermined, and where service policy requires notification to the client when a service is reduced. http://info.dhhs.state.nc.us/olm/manuals/dss/rim-01/man/SIS.htm

Ongoing Activity	Was there at least monthly face to face contact with each or documentation as to why not:	Child	The social worker shall have face to face contact with the child at least monthly. The majority of these visits shall be in the child's residence. The social worker shall have more frequent contact when indicated by the child's needs. The need for less frequent contact must be documented in writing and the documentation should include the level of contact expected. http://info.dhhs.state.nc.us/olm/manuals/dss/csm-10/man/CSs1201c5-07.htm#TopOfPage During the period under review, was the quality of the visits between the caseworker and the child(ren) sufficient to address issues pertaining to the safety, permanency, and well-being of the child and promote achievement of case goals (for example, did the visits between the caseworker or other responsible party and the child(ren) focus on issues pertinent to case planning, service delivery, and goal achievement)? Reviewers should consider whether the caseworker saw the child alone or whether the parent or foster parent was usually present during the
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Ongoing Activity (cont)	Was there at least monthly face to face contact with each or documentation as to why not: (cont)		caseworker's visits with the child. If the child was older than an infant, and the caseworker did not see the child alone for at least part of each visit, then the answer to the question should be No http://info.dhhs.state.nc.us/olm/forms/dss/dss-5223.pdf p.68
		Mother	Social Worker Contact with Parents: When reunification is the plan, there shall be at least one face-to-face contact with parent(s) per month. http://info.dhhs.state.nc.us/olm/manuals/dss/csm-10/man/CSs1201c5-09.htm#TopOfPage
		Father	
		Removal Caretaker	The social worker shall make contact at least twice a month with a person or persons significant to a child's case other than the placement providers, such as family members, collaterals, or other service providers. The agency shall have more frequent contact when indicated by the child's needs. The need for less frequent contact must be documented in writing. http://info.dhhs.state.nc.us/olm/manuals/dss/csm-10/man/CSs1201c5-07.htm
		Step Mother	
		Step Father	
		Congregate Care Provider	The social worker shall also have face-to-face contact with the foster parents at least monthly. http://info.dhhs.state.nc.us/olm/manuals/dss/csm-10/man/CSs1201c5-05.htm#P121_22341
		Resource Parent 1	The social worker shall also have face-to-face contact with the foster parents at least monthly. http://info.dhhs.state.nc.us/olm/manuals/dss/csm-10/man/CSs1201c5-05.htm#P121_22341
		Resource Parent 2	
		Collaterals	The social worker shall make contact at least twice a month with a person or persons significant to a child's case other than the placement providers, such as family members, collaterals, or other service providers.
Was the monthly Foster Care Contact Record documentation completed? DSS-5295, 5296	DSS foster care workers must complete this tool during monthly face-to-face contacts with children in foster care. Review each item on this tool. Exactly how each item is addressed or assessed should be decided by the worker on a case-by-case basis. To gain an accurate picture, also spend time speaking privately with the child and observe interactions between the child and foster/kinship parents; when and how this is done should be decided by the worker on a case-by-case basis. DSS foster care workers must share this completed tool with their supervisors. After it has been approved and signed by the supervisor, it is best practice to distribute it to relevant members of the team serving the child, including the agency's licensing worker, DSS foster care worker, and the foster/kinship parents caring for the child. http://info.dhhs.state.nc.us/olm/forms/dss/dss-5295-ia.pdf		
Reunification Plan	Did contact between the child and the parent occur frequently and include a variety of methods?	Children shall have visits with their parent(s), siblings, and family unless otherwise ordered by the Court or there is written documentation that visitation would be harmful to the child. http://info.dhhs.state.nc.us/olm/manuals/dss/csm-10/man/CSs1201c5-10.htm	
Was there a picture in the record that was taken of the foster child within the last year of custody?	The record shall contain annual pictures of the child. At the time that permanency is achieved, the pictures shall be given to the adult assuming responsibility for the child's care. It is also a good idea to attach copies of current pictures of the child to the agency's report to the court at each review hearing. Pictures in the case record and with the court report keep those involved with the child focused on the child's sense of time and the urgency for permanence. http://info.dhhs.state.nc.us/olm/manuals/dss/csm-10/man/CSs1201c10-03.htm#TopOfPage		
Placement	Total number of placements for entire foster care episode		
	Were all parents notified in writing of impending move per policy? DSS-5189I or DSS-5189II	Procedural Notice to Parents of a Plan to Change Placement of a Child. Parents shall be given written notice of any intended change in the placement of their child. The exceptions to the advance notice are: the child's health or well being would be endangered by delaying the action; or the child would be endangered if prior notice were given. To comply with the above requirement, the agency shall complete the following form: a. Notice to Parent Regarding a Proposed Change in the Placement of the Child (DSS-5189I) This form shall be	

		<p>completed by the agency when the decision is made to move the child. This notice specifies that the parent has 10 days within which to advise the agency of his/her desire to discuss with the social worker or the Permanency Planning Action Team the plan for the proposed change. If the parent does not agree with the decision of the social worker or the Permanency Planning Action Team, he/she has the right to request that the agency file with the Court a motion for review. Pending the hearing on the motion for review, the agency may move the child as planned; however, the court review will determine if the child shall continue in the new placement. If the parents of the child are not living together, each parent must be given this notice.</p> <p>Notice to Parent Regarding a Change in Placement of the Child (DSS-5189II) This form must be completed by the agency when a child has been moved without prior notice to the parent. This notice specifies that the parent has 10 days within which to advise the agency of his/her desire to discuss concerns about the change with the social worker or the Permanency Planning Action Team. If the parent does not agree with the decision of the social worker or the Permanency Planning Action Team, he/she has the right to request that the agency file with the Court a motion for review. The court review will determine if the child shall continue in the new placement. If the parents of the child are not living together, each parent must be given this notice.</p> <p>http://info.dhhs.state.nc.us/olm/manuals/dss/csm-10/man/CSs1201c5-09.htm#TopOfPage</p>
	Was there ongoing shared parenting between the parent and placement resource?	The purpose of shared parenting is to ensure that the child's needs of nurturance and safety are met by partnering between birth parents, foster parents and the child's social worker. It may begin as a meeting but evolves into a true partnership relationship that becomes a continued experience. The purpose of the child and family team meeting is to reach an agreement with the child, youth, family, and community supports on how identified child welfare issues will be addressed throughout the life of the case by developing and implementing a family services agreement.
	Is there documentation of supervisory oversight/staffing's?	The social worker and supervisor shall staff the case frequently enough to ensure the safety of all victim children. Issues to be discussed include but are not limited to, risk, safety, the family's strengths and needs, and the family's progress. (p.19) http://info.dhhs.state.nc.us/olm/manuals/dss/csm-60/man/pdf%20docs/CS1412.pdf

Was there a review within 6 months of custody?	Juvenile Court Case Statutory Timeline	
	Day 0	Juvenile Petition (form AOC-J-130) ⁴ and Non-Secure Custody Order (form AOC-J-150) ⁵ filed
Were there regular court reviews held according to law and policy?	Day 7	Initial hearing to determine need for continued non-secure custody as per N.C.G.S. § 7B-506(a) which may be continued for up to ten (10) business days by consent; subsequent hearings within seven (7) business days and then thirty (30) calendar day intervals as per N.C.G.S. § 7B-506(e)
	Day 60	Adjudicatory hearing no later than sixty (60) days from filing as per N.C.G.S. § 7B-801 unless continued as per N.C.G.S. § 7B-803
	Day 90	Dispositional hearing should take place immediately following adjudication; if not, it shall be concluded within thirty (30) days of the adjudication hearing as per N.C.G.S. § 7B-901
	Day 180	Review of custody order as per N.C.G.S. § 7B-906 must be held within ninety (90) days of disposition with a subsequent review within six (6) months
	Day 365	Permanency planning hearing must be held within twelve (12) months of initial order removing custody, and may be combined with reviews under N.C.G.S. § 7B-906 with subsequent permanency planning hearings at least every six (6) months

Court		http://info.dhhs.state.nc.us/olm/manuals/dss/csm-67/man/CScX-04.htm#P206_19399 A hearing is required for all children under the responsibility for placement and care of a DSS agency. If the plan for reunification is discontinued, a permanency planning hearing is required by law within thirty (30) days of that decision. http://info.dhhs.state.nc.us/olm/manuals/dss/csm-10/man/CSs1201c6-05.htm#TopOfPage
	Was the model court report format used for court reports?	Best Practice/Data gathering question, if not, then are all requirements from model court report in the reports used? This letter is to inform counties of the availability online of "model court reports" for Dispositional and Review, Permanency Planning and Post Termination of Parental Rights Hearings. These model court reports represent the minimum requirements of information that should be provided to judges at these specific hearings. Counties may use their own format or alter these forms as they desire, provided that all of the required elements of information are included and presented to the judge. http://www.ncdhhs.gov/dss/dcdl/famsupchildwelfare/cws-05-09.pdf
	If the child was in custody more than 1 year, were the ASFA requirements met?	A child shall be considered to have entered foster care on the earlier of: the date of the first judicial finding that the child has been subjected to child abuse or neglect; or the date that is 60 days after the date on which the child is removed from the home. http://info.dhhs.state.nc.us/olm/manuals/dss/csm-08/man/PDF%20docs/fr.pdf If the child has been in foster care 12 of the most recent 22 months (or was before the case was closed), the agency must have filed or joined a petition to terminate parental rights. Exceptions to the TPR requirement that must be specified in the court orders include the following: (1) at the option of the State, the child is being cared for by a relative; (2) the agency has documented in the court order a compelling reason for determining that a TPR would not be in the best interest of the child; or (3) the State has not provided to the family the services that the State deemed necessary for the safe return of the child to the child's home if reasonable efforts of the type described in Section 471(a)(15)(B)(ii) of the Social Security Act are required to be made with respect to the child. http://info.dhhs.state.nc.us/olm/forms/dss/dss-5223.pdf p.25 & 26

Termination of Parental Rights and Adoption	Were the parental rights terminated on both parents?	
	Was the NC Kids registration or exemption completed within 30 days of termination and updated if needed? DSS-1820, 1821 or DSS-5225 or DSS-5303	To ensure that NC Kids will provide an effective program in the goal toward permanency planning, all waiting children must be registered within 30 days of becoming legally free for adoption. If an adoptive family has been identified, the adoption agency shall submit a written request for exemption in lieu of registration forms. It is essential that NC Kids be promptly notified of any change in information on the children. The Child Registration Form (DSS-1820) is valid for one year. Agencies are required to submit an updated Child Registration Form, an updated pre-adoptive summary and a current photograph each year for as long as adoption is the plan and no home has been identified for the child. If the case is under appeal, the paperwork shall still be sent to NC Kids http://info.dhhs.state.nc.us/olm/manuals/dss/csm-50/man/CSs1304-02.htm
	Was a child profile completed and sent to NC Kids?	
Termination of Parental Rights and Adoption (cont)	Did the Out of Home Family Services Agreement (DSS-5240) address recruitment of adoptive home and achieve the permanent plan?	When adoption is the plan for the child, the agency must develop a child's specific written strategy for recruitment of an adoptive home, unless a family has clearly been identified. The written strategy shall be developed within 30 days of adoption becoming the permanent plan This should be documented on Out of Home Family Services Agreement (DSS-5240) or may be a separate document. http://info.dhhs.state.nc.us/olm/manuals/dss/csm-50/man/CSs1301-01.htm
	Was an Adoption Assistance Eligibility Checklist completed within 30 days of clearance? DSS-5012	Within 30 days from the time a child has been cleared for adoption, the agency shall assess the child's eligibility for Adoption Assistance. This may occur before an adoptive family has been identified and shall not be based on the income of the prospective adoptive parent. The eligibility must be reflected on the (Adoption Assistance Eligibility Checklist) DSS Form 5012 . http://info.dhhs.state.nc.us/olm/manuals/dss/csm-50/man/CSs1301-01.htm

Caseworkers	Total number of social workers in Foster Care Episode	
	Total number of supervisors in Foster Care Episode?	

Reunification	Was there a trial home visit under court supervision?	<p>The agency should establish a minimum time period for providing supportive aftercare services and supervision to the child and his/her permanent family. In most cases, agency supervision can be terminated after six months unless the Court orders otherwise and/or the final Risk Reassessment indicates additional service needs. http://info.dhhs.state.nc.us/olm/manuals/dss/csm-10/man/CSs1201c9-03.htm#TopOfPage</p> <p>The agency is responsible for working with the parents to help them gain capacity to provide care for their children. This includes, being available to the family for at least three months after reunification to help them remain stable. A trial home visit or aftercare services may be appropriate to help facilitate the transition. A child who has been removed from the custody of a parent (or person acting in loco parentis) by a court order because of abuse or neglect may not be returned for any period of time without judicial review and findings of fact to show that child will receive proper care and supervision. A supervised visit does not fall within the meaning of the term "return" as long as a social worker is present at all times. The agency should work with its juvenile court to determine how the local judges interpret the law on trial visits. http://info.dhhs.state.nc.us/olm/manuals/dss/csm-10/man/CSs1201c6-06.htm</p>
	Were the issues that brought the child into custody resolved?	<p>Reunification should be considered when: The issues that precipitated the child's removal have been addressed and resolved, and Risk to the child has been reduced to a reasonable level; and the parents have made changes in their behavior and circumstances that were identified as needing to change before the child could be returned safely to the home; and The parent has demonstrated capacity and willingness to provide appropriate care for the child; and The child's safety and care in the home is reasonably expected to remain secure; and Supports from the agency and community are in place to assist the family to remain intact. http://info.dhhs.state.nc.us/olm/manuals/dss/csm-10/man/CSs1201c6-06.htm#TopOfPage</p>
	Was a risk re-assessment completed within 30 days of closure?	<p>When a child is reunified with his/her family, the social worker shall complete the Family Risk Reassessment within 30 days of case closure. http://info.dhhs.state.nc.us/olm/manuals/dss/csm-10/man/CSs1201c9-03.htm#TopOfPage</p>

	Was the person receiving guardianship fully informed of benefits, rights, and financial implications?	<p>Guardianship shall only be considered when reunification and adoption are ruled out as permanency options. The agency shall conduct and demonstrate diligent efforts to locate a suitable person who is willing to assume guardianship of the child. Both in-State and out-of-State options must be considered when making reasonable efforts to place the child in accordance with the permanency plan and to finalize the permanency plan. Such efforts shall be documented in the case record and the court report. If the agency is unsuccessful in locating a person willing to assume guardianship of the child within one year, the permanency plan shall be changed unless the agency is able to justify to the court why the plan should remain "guardianship". Justification will include the agency's progress toward locating a suitable person willing to assume legal responsibility for the child. The agency shall assess the suitability of the home for guardianship placement and shall recommend to the court based on their findings. The agency shall assist the prospective guardian through the court process and shall help him understand the responsibilities of guardianship.</p>
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Guardian-ship/Custody	Was adoption discussed as an alternative to guardianship?	The agency will assure that the guardian is aware of resources that may be available to the family should they later decide to adopt the child. The agency shall remain available to provide follow-up services to the guardian on an as-needed basis for six months, in order to assure the stability and health of the placement. Please see the discussion regarding aftercare in Chapter XII - Child Welfare Funding Manual for information on how to fund these services. http://info.dhhs.state.nc.us/olm/manuals/dss/csm-10/man/CSs1201c6-06.htm#TopOfPage
	Was the Comprehensive Assessment for Guardianship completed? DSS-5205	This assessment tool was designed in part to use with kin caregivers who were being considered for eligibility for subsidized guardianship payments. Guardianship subsidies are only available in counties who elect to provide the subsidy, either through IV-E waiver or county funds. The State at this point has not approved funding to provide the guardianship subsidy state wide. This tool can also be used if a kin caregiver does not need agency support, is willing to provide a permanent home for the child, wants to have the legal authority to make most parental decisions on the child's behalf, but will not pursue adoption. The accompanying questionnaire and legal information about the caregiver would be useful to any person considering assuming guardianship of a child in DSS custody. http://info.dhhs.state.nc.us/olm/manuals/dss/csm-10/man/CSs1201xB-05.htm When placement with a relative or other kin is being explored, the agency is required to assess the suitability of that home. The Kinship Care Assessment packets are recommended for use in situations such as: Foster Care Services; child has been living with relative for six months or more, in agency custody for at least one year; neither reunification nor adoption is a suitable option; the placement is stable, and continuation of the placement is in the juvenile's best interest. The Face Sheet and Comprehensive Assessment for Guardianship forms to be completed. Note: If the family has never been assessed, this form combines the Initial and comprehensive Kinship Care Assessments and replaces those two forms. If the Initial and Comprehensive Kinship Care Assessments have been previously completed, only the mandated requirements listed in the adjacent column would be needed to complete the assessment. http://info.dhhs.state.nc.us/olm/forms/dss/dss-5204ins.pdf
	Was the Comprehensive Assessment signed by the prospective guardians?	
	If final placement across state or county lines, was the agency in the other jurisdiction in agreement?	Collaboration among all county DSS agencies involved in a child placement case is essential to providing continuity and stability for children and families during the times they most need it. Counties must facilitate the transfer of information about the family from one to the other in a timely manner. A thorough transfer of information between social workers is critical. A complete and effective transfer of information facilitates continuity of services for the child and family. Sharing information also helps the foster care social worker in developing a timely Out of Home Family Services Agreement for the family and a parallel legal plan for achieving safety and permanency for the child within one year. http://info.dhhs.state.nc.us/olm/manuals/dss/csm-45/man/Chapter_V-05.htm#P717_76072
Did the guardian have the right to speak in court?	Whether licensed as a foster home or not, kinship care providers should be valued and treated as partners with the birth family and the agency...This includes notifying relatives providing care for a child of any court review or hearing to be held about the child and of their opportunity to be heard in court. http://info.dhhs.state.nc.us/olm/manuals/dss/csm-10/man/CSs1201c4-05.htm	

Adoption	<p>Was the Adoption Assistance Eligibility Checklist, Adoption Assistance Agreement, Non-recurring Cost of Adoptions, and Application for Non Recurring Expenses completed and signed by adoption parents?</p> <p>DSS-5012, 5013 and DSS-5145, 5146</p>	<p>Establishing the eligibility for adoption assistance is a task of the services staff of a child's resident agency. The agency is required to use the Adoption Assistance Eligibility Checklist (DSS-5012). Documentation sufficient to establish eligibility can be in the form of statements of diagnosis and/or prognosis from physicians, psychiatrists, speech and other therapists, etc. Documentation in reference to high risk potential should be supported by information about the child's and birth parents' background. This documentation shall be attached to the DSS-5012. The final step in the eligibility process is to have a completed, signed adoption assistance agreement with the adoptive parents. This can be entered into anytime after placement, but must be signed before the Decree of Adoption. & DSS 5103</p> <p>http://info.dhhs.state.nc.us/olm/manuals/dss/csm-78/man/Section%201600.htm</p>
	<p>Was the Information Sharing Acknowledgement (DSS-5246 & DSS-5247) completed and signed by the adopting family?</p>	<p>The prospective adoptive parent: has an approved preplacement assessment; meets foster care licensure standards or has court approval for placement with legal risk parents; has been informed of the legal status of the child and understands that the child is currently not free for adoption and there is a risk that the child may not become free for adoption; has signed the Information Sharing Acknowledgement (DSS-5246)</p> <p>http://info.dhhs.state.nc.us/olm/manuals/dss/csm-50/man/CSs1301-01.htm</p>
	<p>Was the Adoption Assistance Agreement signed by the adopting parents prior to the final order for Adoption?</p>	<p>If yes, and all other items are met, they are Eligible for IV-E adoption assistance</p> <p>http://info.dhhs.state.nc.us/olm/manuals/dss/csm-78/chg/Title%20IV-E%20Adoption%20Assistance%20Flowsheet.pdf</p>