



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

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Sherry S. Bradsher
Division Director

May 15, 2013

DEAR COUNTY DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES

ATTENTION: CHILD WELFARE STAFF

SUBJECT: INTAKE SCREENING OF DWI REPORTS

The North Carolina Division of Social Services (Division) is committed to ensuring the safety, protection, and well-being of the children of North Carolina. In doing so, the Division recognizes that in order to keep pace with the ever-changing field of child welfare, it is important to be receptive to information and feedback warranting a review of previous policy guidance. This letter addresses the screening of reports that involve allegations of a parent or caretaker driving while impaired and reflects a revision of previous guidance.

Released in October 2006, Administrative Letter FSCWS-13-06 (http://info.dhhs.state.nc.us/olm/manuals/dss/csm-05/man/FSCW_AL_1306.htm - P9 223) stated that in instances where the only allegation is that the child was present at the time when a driving while impaired (DWI) citation was issued to a parent or caretaker; the criteria for a Child Protective Services Assessment was not necessarily met.

At the request of local child welfare agencies, the Division contacted various states across the nation, surveyed the local child welfare agencies in North Carolina, and consulted with the child welfare legal team within the North Carolina Attorney General's Office. These consultations revealed that the Division should revise its previous stance. Therefore, the Division is now advising that an allegation of a parent or caretaker being charged with a DWI offense while a child is in the car **shall** now be accepted for assessment. The local child welfare agencies maintain both the discretion of classifying these types of allegations, as well as how to assess the concerns (i.e. Investigative vs. Family Assessments). In order to allow agencies time to adjust to this change and train their staff, this policy interpretation is effective beginning June 15, 2013.

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If you have any questions about this guidance, please contact child welfare policy consultant Arlette Lambert at (919) 334-1152 or arlette.lambert@dhhs.nc.gov. You may also contact your Children's Program Representative for additional information.

Sincerely,



Kevin Kelley, Section Chief
Child Welfare Services

CC: Jack Rogers
Child Welfare Services Team Leaders

CWS-06-2013

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