



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

Date: March 17, 2021

DEAR COUNTY DIRECTORS OF SOCIAL SERVICES

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

SUBJECT: SURVEY REGARDING CHILDREN RESIDING IN CONGREGATE CARE

REQUIRED ACTION: Information Only Time Sensitive Immediate

Limitations in federal IV-E reimbursement for children receiving foster care services in congregate care facilities take effect October 1, 2021 as part of the Family First Preservation Services Act (FFPSA). After that date, federal IV-E maintenance reimbursement for new congregate care placements will be limited to two weeks unless the facility meets and is approved for one of the "specified settings" as defined in the Act. The loss of revenue will be greatest for new placements in residential childcare facilities, where the full cost can be claimed to IV-E, but will also impact new placements in treatment facilities where the Medicaid funded treatment cost is supplemented by a board rate.

North Carolina is approaching this challenge by asking how we can best meet the needs of children who were previously placed in congregate care in the context of the new funding realities. We are asking questions like:

- For how many children is congregate care truly the best option?
- How many children placed in congregate care could have been placed in a family setting such as kinship homes, foster homes, or therapeutic homes if such homes had been available or if homes that would accept sibling groups or teens had been available?
- To what extent should North Carolina invest in strategies to increase the number of available foster homes generally or specifically in foster homes that accept teens or sibling groups or in strategies to support families in locating kinship care options?
- To what extent should North Carolina invest in strategies to provide more supports to family-based placements and which supports are most needed?

To answer these questions, we will be studying administrative data about children placed in congregate care. We need to supplement administrative data with information from county child welfare staff who know the children in congregate care. We need to know why children were placed in congregate care, such as residential childcare, and whether there are services or supports that might have allowed the children to be successfully placed in a family setting. We have compiled a brief set of survey questions to be completed for each child in your county who was placed in a congregate care facility on November 30, 2020. We are requesting that you ask the case worker assigned to the child to complete the survey for that child. The questions are designed so that a case worker familiar with a child could answer the questions for that child in about 10 to 15 minutes.

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LOCATION: 820 S. Boylan Avenue, McBryde Building, Raleigh, NC 27603
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We have used administrative data to identify the following two groups of children in the custody of your county who were in a congregate care placement on November 30, 2020:

- a) Foster Children placed in DSS licensed Residential Child Care facilities--non-treatment congregate care group homes or facilities funded primarily through the child welfare system.
- b) Foster Children placed in DHRS licensed residential treatment facilities--congregate care group homes or facilities that receive board payments through the child welfare system but receive primary funding through Medicaid.

Surveys will be available for completion electronically via Survey Max. They can be accessed using the following weblinks:

Survey A <https://surveymax.dhhs.state.nc.us/TakeSurvey.aspx?SurveyID=74MH4943>

Survey B <https://surveymax.dhhs.state.nc.us/TakeSurvey.aspx?SurveyID=l2MH4m4K>

Case workers should complete Survey A for children placed in DSS licensed residential childcare facilities. Case workers should complete Survey B for children placed in DHRS licensed residential treatment programs. The surveys in PDF form are attached for information and preparation only.

A spreadsheet with the names of the children who will be the subjects of the survey will be sent to your agency's Child Welfare Manager by the Regional Child Welfare Consultant no later than Monday, March 22, 2021. It will be password protected. We are asking that all surveys be completed and submitted no later than Friday, April 16, 2021.

We look forward to sharing results specific to your county from administrative data and from your surveys, as well as statewide results from administrative data and from the county surveys, and to using the information gathered to plan together how to provide the best services to meet the needs of our children and families.

Sincerely,



Lisa Tucker Cauley

Senior Director for Child, Family and Adult Services

Cc: Susan Osborne, Assist Secretary for County Operations for Human Services
Teresa Strom, Section Chief for County Operations
Carla McNeill, Section Chief of Permanency
Kathy Stone, Section Chief for Child Protective Services and Prevention
Linda Waite, Interim Section Chief for Regulatory & Licensing
Joy Smith, Child Welfare Business Intelligence Manager

Attachments: Survey A: Children Placed in Residential Child Care Facilities (non-treatment) (PDF)
Survey B: Children Placed in Residential Treatment Programs (PDF)

CWS-07-2021

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