



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

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Courier # 56-20-25

Beverly Eaves Perdue, Governor  
Lanier M. Cansler, Secretary

Sherry S. Bradsher, Director  
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June 1, 2011

**DEAR COUNTY DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES**

**ATTENTION: CHILD WELFARE PROGRAM MANAGERS, SUPERVISORS, AND  
CHILD WELFARE WORKERS**

**SUBJECT: SUPERVISION IN CHILD WELFARE:  
A SUMMARY OF THE 2009 BEST PRACTICE STUDY**

The North Carolina Division of Social Services is committed to strengthening child welfare supervision and included it as a continuous improvement strategy in its 2007 Program Improvement Plan (PIP). As a means of further exploring this topic, a workgroup comprised of supervisors was created in 2008 as a recommendation from the National Resource Center. This workgroup has since become the Child Welfare Supervision Advisory Committee (CWSAC).

Since the formation of the group, CWSAC has accomplished the following:

- Developed a long-range supervisory strategic plan
- Completed a time study analysis
- Concluded a technology assessment
- Piloted 5 best practice principles in supervision
- Created an on-line supervisory toolkit ([http://www.ncdhhs.gov/dss/best\\_practices\\_pilot/](http://www.ncdhhs.gov/dss/best_practices_pilot/))
- Functioned as an advisory group to the Division on policy and practice issues

Additionally, CWSAC recognized the importance of gathering data from across the state describing child welfare supervision. With help from the National Resource Center for Organizational Improvement and the National Resource Center for Child Welfare Data and Technology, the Division issued a survey to direct social work staff in 2009. The survey yielded 1100 responses, representing a 39% response rate. The data was analyzed through the Division's Performance Management Team and the University of North Carolina at Chapel-Hill. The attached survey results are made up of both quantitative data, as well as qualitative data consisting of comments provided from workers. As a part of their responses, social workers were asked to describe "good supervision". These responses were categorized into the following themes: Education, Coaching and Support, Leadership and Communication, and Accountability.

Based on results from this survey and from a two-year pilot of best practices in supervision, the Division and CWSAC make the following recommendations for supervision in child welfare:

- Child welfare supervisors hold weekly scheduled supervision with staff and at least two scheduled individual conferences per month
- Child welfare supervisor protect scheduled time by being truly available to the worker (placing “do not disturb” notices on phones and doors, not answering e-mails during worker meetings, etc.)
- Child welfare supervisor and worker use a structured, purposeful format for supervision
- Child welfare supervisor coach and mentor staff to use supervision time more purposefully
- Child welfare supervisors uses a consistent case review tool on at least two case records from each staff member each quarter.

Implementing the above recommendations is a vital component to improving the supervision in child welfare across the state. As a means of successfully assessing the success of these strategies, the Division is recruiting supervisors as new members of CWSAC. If you're interested in shaping supervision across the state, contact Jeff Olson at [jeffrey.olson@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:jeffrey.olson@dhhs.nc.gov) or 919-334-1137.

Sincerely,



Kevin Kelley, Interim Section Chief  
Child Welfare Services

Attachment: [Supervision Study March 2011](#)

cc: Sherry Bradsher  
Jack Rogers  
Child Welfare Services Team Leaders

**CWS-15-11**