



NC DEPARTMENT OF  
**HEALTH AND  
HUMAN SERVICES**

**ROY COOPER** • Governor

**MANDY COHEN, MD, MPH** • Secretary

**SUSAN OSBORNE** • Assistant Secretary for County Operations for  
Human Services

October 25, 2019

**DEAR COUNTY DIRECTORS OF SOCIAL SERVICES AND COMMUNITY CHILD PROTECTION TEAM  
CHAIRPERSONS**

**ATTENTION: CHILD WELFARE DIRECTORS, PROGRAM ADMINISTRATORS, and CHILD WELFARE  
PROFESSIONALS**

**SUBJECT: URGENT- POLICY AND PRACTICE ALERT**

**REQUIRED ACTION:**  Information Only  Time Sensitive  **Immediate**

On October 15, 2019 you received a DCDL (CWS-27-2019) reminding you of child protective services policy and practice requirements for county departments of social services (DSS). Specifically, the letter outlined the way an open CPS case may be closed. This does not include the county DSS facilitating or directly filing a civil custody action on behalf of a third party against the parent(s) of the child(ren) being served by the county DSS.

As indicated in that letter, NCDHHS plans to follow up with each individual county to discuss the practices of each county. Starting on Monday, October 28, 2019, NCDHHS will begin on-site visits to counties solely to gather information. In preparation for these visits, we are providing you with the following information:

- 1) Please prepare a list of all open cases, or cases that have been closed within the previous 12 months, that included a civil custody action under Chapter 50 of the general statutes.
- 2) Please be prepared to answer the following question:
  - a. If custody of a child needs to be removed from a parent and awarded to another caretaker, does your county use or facilitate any process other than petitioning for custody in accordance with Chapter 7B of the General Statutes? If so, please provide information about that process.
- 3) When the Children's Program Representative (CPR) arrives on-site, they will conduct a review of the identified cases including: a review for documentation of safety, services provided to parents prior to any action for custody, and justification for case closure.
- 4) The CPR will meet with the director and supervisors to gather information related to the practices of the agency.

The first scheduled visits are identified in the attachment that accompanies this letter. Please note that these counties have been identified for visits based on availability of our CPRs. For all other counties, we

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will provide each individual county with a specific date and time of the on-site visit. A CPR will contact you prior to the visit to discuss item #2 in the above list.

Our goal with this request is to gather information to more broadly understand the practices of the counties and then provide state-wide guidance to collaboratively support you and appropriately serve children and families.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lisa Cauley". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Lisa Cauley

Child Welfare Director

cc: Susan G. Osborne, Assistant Secretary for County Operations  
Angela Pittman, Senior Director - Child, Family and Adult Services  
Teresa Strom, Section Chief for County Operations  
Julie Cronin, Assistant General Counsel, NC DHHS  
Peter West, Local Support Team Manager

CWS-30-2019