



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

325 North Salisbury Street • Mail Service Center 2406 Raleigh, North Carolina 27699-2406  
Courier # 56-20-25

Beverly Eaves Perdue, Governor  
Lanier M. Cansler, Secretary

Sherry S. Bradsher, Director  
(919) 733-3055

**November 30, 2009**

**DEAR COUNTY DIRECTORS OF SOCIAL SERVICES**

**BEAUFORT, BLADEN, CASWELL, CHEROKEE, CLAY, GRAHAM, HAYWOOD, HOKE,  
HYDE, JACKSON, MARTIN, NASH, NORTHAMPTON, PERSON, ROBESON,  
RUTHERFORD, SCOTLAND, SWAIN, TRANSYLVANIA, WARREN, WASHINGTON, WILKES**

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

**SUBJECT: SURVEY ON CONTINUANCES IN THE COURT SYSTEM**

The North Carolina Division of Social Services (NCDSS) is interested in addressing court delays in order to achieve timely permanency for children and youth. Our state's 2007 Program Improvement Plan includes strategies aimed at collaborative work between courts and agencies. As a result of state level collaboration between NCDSS leadership and leadership from the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC), it has become apparent that there are judicial districts or counties within judicial districts experiencing issues with continuances. NCDSS, the Program Services Division of AOC, the state Guardian ad litem (GAL) program, and the Office of Indigent Services (IDS) are working together to reduce the number of continuances in abuse, neglect and dependency (AND) and termination of parental rights (TPR) cases. From data collected by the state GAL program, it appears that in FY 2007-2008 there were 22 counties where AND and TPR hearings had a continuance rate higher than 40%.

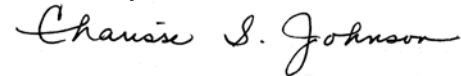
As an effort to identify some of the barriers or practices that are causing continuances in these 22 counties, we have developed a survey for county child welfare staff, district court judges, juvenile clerks, GAL attorneys and staff, DSS attorneys and staff, and parent attorneys.

The results of the survey will be shared with each county. It is our hope that the information will enable each county to develop local solutions that will help reduce the number of continuances in AND and TPR cases.

The deadline for completion of this survey is December 18, 2009. Here is the link to the survey:  
[http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=X5qeikhcwTsMnN9n08FEsA\\_3d\\_3d](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=X5qeikhcwTsMnN9n08FEsA_3d_3d)

NCDSS encourages all child welfare staff who have experienced continuances in AND or TPR hearings to complete this survey. Your suggestions for improvement are important. If you have questions regarding this survey, please contact Candice Britt, 919-334-1138, [candice.britt@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:candice.britt@dhhs.nc.gov)

Sincerely,



Charisse S. Johnson, Chief  
Child Welfare Services

cc: Sherry S. Bradsher  
Sarah Barham  
Child Welfare Services Team Leaders  
Children's Services Program  
Representatives  
Local Business Liaisons  
Regulatory and Licensing Services  
Consultants  
Jack Rogers

**CWS-45-09**