



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

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Michael F. Easley, Governor
Dempsey Benton, Secretary

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December 15, 2008

DEAR COUNTY DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES

ATTENTION: CHILD WELFARE PROGRAM ADMINISTRATORS AND SUPERVISORS

**SUBJECT: MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF THE COURTS, DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES AND THE OFFICE OF INDIGENT
DEFENSE SERVICES**

The 2007 Federal Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) is a comprehensive Examination of each state's child welfare system. North Carolina's Case Review System was cited as an area needing improvement. As a result, the Administrative Office of the Courts, the Office of Indigent Defense Services (IDS) and the Department of Health and Human Services (North Carolina Division of Social Services) have entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) regarding the joint responsibility to protect and provide permanency to North Carolina's children while improving outcomes for families affected by abuse, neglect and dependency. A copy is attached for your review.

The state level MOU is designed to facilitate a collaborative relationship between parties involved in the Case Review System. It is our intention to improve the outcomes of safety, permanency and well-being of abused, neglected and dependent children who are in the court system. The MOU addresses best court practices, partner collaboration, training and local level implementation and is meant to provide a framework for working together. The MOU has been carefully developed by court and child welfare leaders who are committed to improving outcomes for children and families. We recognize that this endeavor requires time and attention at the state level as well as the local level.

We are encouraging each county to develop a local Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) or revisit existing MOA's by July 1, 2009. To help with this process, a local level Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) framework and a Procedural guide are attached. We are available for consultation in the development of your local level MOA. Please contact Candice Britt, Child and Family Services Review Coordinator, candice.britt@ncmail.net, for further assistance.

The local level MOA and Procedural Guide are being distributed to: 100 county departments of social services, the Court Improvement Project Advisory Committee, the Family Court Advisory Committee, Guardian Ad Litem staff and volunteers, parent attorneys (IDS) and judges. We encourage you to contact your county's chief district court judge and offer your assistance in convening a steering committee to begin the MOA development process.

Any questions about the state level MOA or about working collaboratively with courts should be addressed to Candice Britt, 919-334-1138.

Sincerely,



Charisse S. Johnson, Chief
Child Welfare Services

Attachments:

AOC DSS Final MOA 11-27-08

Procedural Guide Final 11-27-08

Dependency Court MOU.pdf

CWS-67-08