



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

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Michael F. Easley, Governor  
Director  
Carmen Hooker Odom, Secretary

Pheon E. Beal,  
(919) 733-3055

July 18, 2003

### **DEAR COUNTY DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES**

**Attention:** Children's Services Supervisors, Program Managers and  
Data Entry Supervisors

**Subject:** Changes to the Child Placement and Payment System (DSS-5094)

**Effective:** August 1, 2003

**References:** Child Placement and Payment System Change Notice dated 4/11/03

In order to respond to the ongoing reporting needs from our federal and state partners, the Division has further modified the Child Placement and Payment System (DSS-5094) in order to continue to capture a child's progress towards permanency, as well as the number of placements that a child experiences while in the custody of a county Department of Social Services on a consistent bases. This letter is to inform all staff in county Departments of Social Services responsible for completing or entering data for the DSS-5094 that the automated system will force an entry into Field # 46 (Progress Towards Permanency) as of August 1, 2003

In the Change Notice dated 4/11/03, the Division identified a revision to field #46 (Progress towards Permanence). This change was designed to accurately capture the child's permanency status in each placement and whether any changes in Living Arrangement (Field #45) or any changes in Facility ID Number (Field #49), Monthly Rate (Field #50), or Payment Amount (Field # 51) that requires a new line of data be entered were considered actual moves for the child. Until this change there was no consistently accurate method for determining "Stability of Foster Care Placement," which is a National Outcome Data Standard. As a part of North Carolina's Program Improvement Plan with the federal government following the federal Child and Family Services Review, the Division committed to improvements in the Child Placement and Payment System to more accurately collect these data for reporting to the Automated Foster Care and Adoption Reporting System (AFCARS).

North Carolina's definition for Permanency is "a lasting, nurturing relationship between the child and at least one adult that is characterized by mutual commitment and that is legally secure." Being "legally secure" means that the county Department of Social Services no longer has custody or placement responsibility of the child. Prior to the April 11, 2003 Change Notice, each county was instructed to key an "X" into Field #46 (Progress Towards Permanence) to indicate

when everything was in place for permanence except that the placement was not yet legally secure. Counties were instructed to leave Field # 46 blank if the placement was not considered one where there was progress towards permanence. The April 11, 2003, Change Notice gave new instructions for Field # 46 for county Departments of Social Services for entering numeric codes into the field that would indicate whether the placement was considered progress towards permanence or not and whether an actual move for a child had occurred or not. Although these instructions indicated that this field was now a required field and that the new codes were to be used, at that point, there was no system edit in place to prevent an entry of an "X", nor was there an edit that would not allow a blank in this Field.

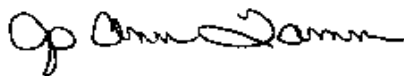
**As of August 1, 2003 an "X" or blank in this field will not be allowed.** The system edits will be in place as of that date. It will be required that one of the numeric values listed below be selected and entered. Please refer to the April 11, 2003 Change Notice for detailed instructions, definitions, and examples. The system update will allow each county to enter the following values for each code:

- 1 = Move: Progress Towards Permanency
- 2 = Move: No Progress Towards Permanency
- 3 = Not a Move: Progress Towards Permanency
- 4 = Not a Move: No progress Towards Permanency

As stated in previous correspondence, this is a required field that should correspond with the placement entered in field #45 (Living Arrangement). Failure to update this information will result in the system not accepting data entry updates to the DSS-5094.

Incorporating this change will allow the Division to provide more relevant AFCARS data related to the "Progress towards Permanence" for each child in the Child Placement and Payment system and more accurately report "Stability of Foster Care Placements". If you have questions about entering data into the system from a completed DSS-5094, contact the DIRM help desk at (919) 733-9100 or contact staff in the Data Management and Review team at (919) 733-3801. If you have additional questions related to the completion of the DSS-5094 and specific policy implications, please contact your Children's Program Representative.

Sincerely,



JoAnn Lamm, Program Administrator  
Family Support and Child Welfare Services Section

Cc: Pheon Beal  
Sherry Bradsher  
Mike James  
Family Support and Child Welfare Team Leaders  
Children's Program Representatives

JAL/asj  
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