



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

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Michael F. Easley, Governor
Dempsey Benton, Secretary

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

March 17, 2008

DEAR COUNTY DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES

SUBJECT: 2008 MRS LEARNING INSTITUTE ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Division is honored to invite you and your staff to its 2008 MRS Learning Institute, *Working in Harmony: Families, Community and Social Services*. The purpose of the MRS Learning Institute is to promote the strengthening of MRS as North Carolina's practice model through the creation of a supportive learning environment, skills building, and networking opportunities for DSS staff and community partners. As a practice model, MRS incorporates family centered practice using the principles of partnership grounded in a System of Care approach. The MRS Institute is an extension of the training programs and technical assistance activities the Division provides to the 100 county departments of social services and their community partners. This letter will address three important areas related to the upcoming Institute: a Save the Date announcement, request for assistance with door prizes, and a Call for Proposal announcement.

Save the Date

The Institute will begin **Monday, August 18, 2008 at 9:30 a.m.** with a facilitated discussion related to "MRS 101" for any staff interested in learning the basic principles and philosophy of MRS. The opening luncheon for all participants will begin at 11:30 a.m. August 18th and the Institute will end at 1:30 p.m. Wednesday, August 20, 2008. It will be held at the Sheraton Four Seasons located in Greensboro, North Carolina. We anticipate being able to accommodate 500 staff from county Departments of Social Services and community partners. Attached please find a "Save the Date" flyer to circulate within your organization and among your community partners. Additional details concerning this event and lodging will be forthcoming in the near future.

Request for Door Prizes

We would also like to request your agency join us in making this event an exciting, fun experience for your staff by asking you to consider donating an item to be given away as a door prize. The item could be up to \$25.00 in value and would be brought to the Institute. Musically themed door prizes would help add to the experience of this year's Institute.

Call for Proposals

This Institute is designed to provide high quality training for beginning and experienced professionals with a special emphasis on developing Family Centered Practice principles and System of Care skills sets. This includes such concepts as utilizing community-based prevention services, collaborating with community partners, recognizing strengths, meeting the

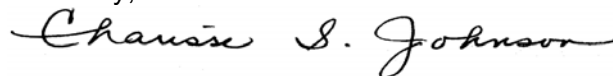
needs of families utilizing strengths, and increasing partnership development with families. Also highlighted will be self-care strategies and diversity skill building workshops. Please find attached to this letter a Call for Proposals form to complete **and return by April 11, 2008**. We encourage proposals that highlight the partnership between the Department of Social Services staff, families, foster and adoptive parents and community partners. Any topics that meet these criteria are welcome, but specific topics of interest include:

Engaging Children in Child and Family Teams	Dual Jurisdiction Collaboration
Mental Health 101 for Child Welfare Workers	Choosing the Right Permanency Plan
Engaging Families with Mental Health Issues	Collaboration with Law Enforcement
Child and Family Team Meeting Documentation	Combining all Team Meetings
Conquering Foster Parent Myths in Shared Parenting	Stress Management
Use of a Neutral Facilitator in Child and Family Teams	Collaboration with the Court System
Partnering with the Community	Adoption & Post-Adoption Services
Working with Latino Families	Successful Cross-County Collaborations

Please direct any questions regarding the MRS Institute to: Teresa Turner, Staff Development Team Program Administrator or to R. Patrick Betancourt, MRS Program Coordinator. Teresa can be reached at 919-733-7674 or via e-mail at teresa.turner@ncmail.net. Patrick can be reached at 919-733-4622 or via e-mail at patrick.betancourt@ncmail.net.

Thank you for your commitment to the safety, permanence, and well-being of North Carolina's children and families. We are delighted to be partnered with you in the service to these children and their families.

Sincerely,



Charisse Johnson, Chief
Family Support and Child Welfare Services

CSJ/rpb

Enclosures: [2008 MRS Learning Institute Save the Date flyer](#)
[Call for Proposals](#)

cc:

Sherry Bradsher
JoAnn Lamm
Sarah Barham
Children's Program Representatives
Work First Representatives
Family Support and Child Welfare Services Team Leaders
Local Business Liaisons

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