



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

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Raleigh, North Carolina 27699-2408
Courier # 56-20-25

Michael F. Easley, Governor
Carmen Hooker Odom, Secretary

Pheon E. Beal, Director
(919) 733-3055

August 2, 2004

Dear County Directors of Social Services
Licensed Private Adoption Agencies

Attention: Supervisors of Adoption Services

Subject: Adoption Assistance Eligibility for Children Released to Private Agencies

The Division would like to provide clarity regarding time frames in establishing adoption assistance eligibility for children released to private agencies. It has always been the policy that the determination of eligibility and administration of adoption assistance benefits are the responsibility of the child's resident county departments of social services when the child is in the placement responsibility of a private child-placing agency. (See Volume I, Chapter VI, Section 1305). Therefore, the private agencies must depend on the departments of social services to provide these services. It has come to our attention that private agencies are experiencing difficulty in receiving timely responses to requests for adoption assistances for children in their care, thereby delaying placements with waiting families. The requirement in standard #95 to "assess the child's eligibility for adoption assistance within 30 days from the time a child has been cleared for adoption" also applies to children referred by private agencies.

There continues to be some confusion about the funding source of adoption assistance for children who come from the private agencies. The funding source for these children is "state adoption fund" (SAF) unless the children receive social security disability (SSI). In that case the funding source is IV-E. It is the responsibility of the departments of social services to determine Medicaid eligibility and to provide Medicaid for children released to private agencies when they are eligible for adoption assistance.

We continue to emphasize the need for collaboration with private agencies to find homes for children with special needs in the custody of departments of social services. It is also important that we do all we can to provide permanency for children with special needs who are released to private agencies. We know you will work with the private agencies to make this happen.

If you have any questions regarding adoption assistance, please contact the Foster Care and Adoption Policy Team at 919-733-2580.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "JoAnn Lamm".

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

Cc: Pheon Beal
Sherry Bradsher
Family Support and Child Welfare Services Team Leaders
Children's Programs Representatives
Work First Representatives

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