



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

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Michael F. Easley, Governor
Dempsey Benton, Secretary

Sherry S. Bradsher, Director

October 10, 2007

DEAR COUNTY DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES

**ATTENTION: CHILD WELFARE SUPERVISORS
CHILD PLACEMENT and LICENSING STAFF**

SUBJECT: FOSTER HOME RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION PROJECT

The North Carolina Division of Social Services has contracted with the UNC-Chapel Hill School of Social Work, Jordan Institute for Families to assist with a statewide campaign to retain and recruit foster parents. This project is reflected in our Program Improvement Plan for our most recent Child and Family Services Review. This campaign will support foster parent recruitment and retention efforts in all 100 county departments of social services. Agencies will be engaged in targeted recruitment of foster parents to reflect the ethnic and age needs of children and youth in placement.

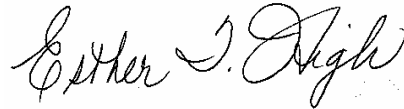
The recruitment and retention campaign, like the Multiple Response System, will be based on the strategies recommended by best practice and evidence-based research. This campaign will concentrate on the application of broad but concrete strategies that individual agencies can implement to meet their specific needs, and it will build on the success of MRS and reinforce the strengths of North Carolina's child welfare system. Recruiting and retaining foster parents is a community responsibility. Counties as well as clusters of counties will be encouraged to use existing interagency committees, collaboratives, and other groups to lead this campaign on the local level.

The key elements of this project include a web-based survey, community forums, the development of recruitment and retention tool kits and the dissemination of the tool kits. The first step in this project involves a web-based survey of county departments of social services. The survey will ask about demographics of each agency's staffing, children in care, and foster homes; elicit feedback on the suggested strategies for the campaign; and ask about each agency's needs and ideas in the areas of foster parent recruitment and retention. In the near future the director of each county DSS will be

contacted via e-mail, given a link to this brief survey, and asked to have someone in his or her agency complete this survey within 21 days.

We are asking that each county department of social services designate a contact person for this project. We will collect this information on the web-based survey. If you have questions related to this survey or the campaign please contact Bob Hensley at 828-287-6898 or by e-mail (Bob.Hensley@ncmail.net).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Esther T. High". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "E".

Esther T. High, Acting Chief
Family Support and Child Welfare Section

cc: Sherry S. Bradsher
Jo Ann Lamm
Sarah Barham
Local Business Liaisons Managers
Family Support and Child Welfare Services Team Leaders
Children's Services Program Representatives
Regulatory and Licensing Services Consultants

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