



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

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Courier # 56-20-25

Michael F. Easley, Governor
Carmen Hooker Odom, Secretary

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

May 12, 2004

DEAR COUNTY DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES

ATTENTION: CHILD WELFARE SUPERVISORS AND SOCIAL WORKERS

SUBJECT: LEGISLATIVE MANDATE FOR TRAINING

EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY

The focus of the NC Division of Social Services, Family Support and Child Welfare Section is to meet three key outcomes for children and families in North Carolina: Safety, Permanence, and Child and Family Well-being. These outcomes must be accomplished while maintaining a family's basic rights under state and federal law of the right to privacy, freedom from duress and coercion to induce co-operation, and the right to parent. Training child welfare workers across North Carolina in family centered practice principles is our best opportunity at laying a strong foundation upon which these outcomes can be achieved. As you are aware, the last session of the General Assembly also recognized the importance of providing training to child welfare workers to achieve these goals. Two additional training requirements were added related to mandated child welfare social work practice and training that must be disseminated to all 100 county Department of Social Services child welfare workers.

The first relates to new child welfare training requirements. GS 131D-10.6A(b), Section 4.2 reads as rewritten:

(b) The Division of Social Services shall establish minimum training requirements for child welfare staff. The minimum training requirements established by the Division are as follows:

- (1) Child Welfare services workers shall complete a minimum of 72 hours of preservice training before assuming direct client contact responsibilities. In completing this requirement, the Division of Social Services shall ensure that each child welfare worker receives training on family centered practices and State and federal law regarding the basic rights of individuals relevant to the provision of child welfare services, including the right to privacy, freedom from duress and coercion to induce cooperation, and the right to parent.
- (5) Child welfare services staff shall complete 24 hours of continuing education annually. In completing this requirement, the Division of Social Services shall provide each child welfare services staff member with annual update information on family centered practices and State and federal law regarding the basic rights of individuals relevant to the provision of child welfare services, including the right to privacy, freedom from duress and coercion to induce cooperation, and the right to parent.

Also, Section 4.1 Chapter 7B-302 was amended to include a new subsection (h) related to family's rights in child welfare cases, which reads:

The director or director's representative may not enter a private residence for investigation purposes without at least one of the following:

1. The reasonable belief that a juvenile is in imminent danger of death or serious physical injury.
2. The permission of the parent or person responsible for the juvenile's care.
3. The accomplishment of a law enforcement officer who has the legal authority to enter the residence.
4. An order from a court of competent jurisdiction.

The most practical and efficient way to disseminate the required information to all 100 county Departments of Social Services and provide consistent and ongoing training to all current and new child welfare workers was through the development of a training video. The training video is included in this packet.

It is the expectation that agencies will arrange for the video to be viewed as soon as possible by all current child welfare staff and by new staff at orientation or before assuming their duties. Agencies will develop their own documentation of worker compliance with this mandate. Documentation may be monitored periodically.

To meet the continuing education requirement, agencies will be expected to arrange for workers to view the video on an annual basis. The Division will provide updated information on family centered practice to agencies, as well as, any new legislation regarding these issues as new information is available.

Please note that you will be able to access this letter on the DSS Web Site at <http://www.dhhs.state.nc.us/dss/dcdl/section/childrenservices.htm> or the Children's Services website. If you have any questions regarding the required training, please contact Ruth Harrison at (919)-733- 7672.

Sincerely,



Jo Ann Lamm, Program Administrator
Family Support and Child Welfare Services Section

JAL/rh
Attachment

cc: Pheon Beal
Sherry Bradsher
Children's Services Team Leaders
Children's Services Program Representatives

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