

**North Carolina Division of Social Services
Child and Family Services Review Protocol for Pilot Counties
Attachment A**

I. Purpose of the Internal Child and Family Services Reviews (CFSR)

North Carolina is dedicated to a very high standard of continuous quality improvement in child welfare performance. The CFSR is built on the premise that the best outcomes derive from a system that evaluates itself. The internal review process for the pilot counties is designed to measure outcomes and practice. The process also provides public accountability for the State's Child Welfare System. The intent of the internal review is to provide ongoing and continuous quality assurance. The State led CFSR will establish baselines; and for those counties who meet substantial conformity in all outcome areas, less frequent reviews will be conducted.

II. Coordination of Internal Reviews

A. Review Team

Each pilot county will designate staff to serve on the internal review team. In order to participate as a reviewer in the internal review process, county staff must complete the required CFSR training prior to the scheduled review. Each county will determine the process of their internal review. The pilot county will schedule their internal reviews and notify their CPR of the date of that review.

B. Timeline of Internal Reviews

Counties choosing to participate in the pilot process will conduct two internal reviews within a year with a sample of cases based on the size of the county. Timing of internal reviews will be as follows:

- First review, January or February of 2008
- Second Review: six months later in July or August of 2008

A State CFSR will follow the county's internal review and will be conducted some time between January and June of 2009.

III. Sample to be Reviewed and Review Period

A combination of Reports Not Accepted for CPS Investigative/Family Assessment, CPS Investigative/Family Assessment, CPS In Home, Child Placement and jurisdiction/cross county cases will be reviewed.

A smaller sample size than that of the full state CFSR will be selected for

internal reviews conducted by pilot counties. Further information is detailed in Section V.

IV. Responsibilities of the Agency

- Select, according to criteria discussed below under *Case Selection and Review*, the cases to be reviewed internally.
- Maintain the list of cases reviewed during pilot reviews and dates of the reviews.
- Ensure that those participating in the internal review have completed the required CFSR training prior to the date of the internal review.
- Assemble all case records to be reviewed so that they will be accessible and ready for review.
- Provide copies of the State CFSR Instrument for use in the Internal Review.

V. Case Selection and Review

Select Assessments, Reports not accepted for Assessments, In Home, Placement, and jurisdiction/cross county services cases, to be reviewed from a pool of cases, which have received services in the twelve months prior to the internal review. In Home and Placement services, cases must have received services for at least six months of that twelve-month period. Reports Not Accepted and Assessments in the selected cases that were completed within the period being reviewed should be included in the review process.

Example:

If an internal review takes place on January 3, 2008, cases that have been open for at least six months between January 3, 2007 and January 3, 2008 will be eligible for review.

Number of Cases to be reviewed:

- **Level III counties** will have three Placement cases, three In Home cases, three Investigative/Family Assessment cases that were found to be unsubstantiated, substantiated and closed, services recommended, services not recommended, or services provided and no longer needed. In addition, one jurisdiction/cross county case and eight reports not accepted for Investigative/Family Assessments will be reviewed.
- **Level II counties** will have three Placement cases, three In Home cases, three Investigative/Family Assessment cases that were found to be unsubstantiated, substantiated and closed, services recommended, services not recommended, or services provided and services no longer needed. In addition, one jurisdiction/cross county case and eight

reports not accepted for Investigative/Family Assessments will be reviewed.

- **Level I counties** will have two Placement cases, two In Home cases, two Investigative /Family Assessment cases that were found to be unsubstantiated, substantiated and closed, services recommended, services not recommended, or services provided and services no longer needed. In addition, one jurisdiction/cross county case and four reports not accepted for Investigative/Family Assessments will be reviewed.

Case Interviews

Staff members assigned to review a particular case are responsible for interviewing the social workers and/or supervisors involved in the case, as well as reviewing the case record. Additional interviews are not required.

VI. Review Process

Each Pilot county is responsible for developing their own internal review process. However, the instrument used by each pilot county should be the same instrument used by the State Child and Family Review Team. Refer to the Division Website to obtain the most current review instrument. The Agency should ensure that case reviews are not being conducted by staff that holds primary responsibility for the case being reviewed. Findings from the record review, along with supporting/clarifying information obtained from interviews, will be documented on the review instrument. The completed CFSR review instrument should be maintained with the case file. The Division strongly encourages that counties conduct case debriefing sessions as a part of the internal review process in order to fully benefit from the evaluation. Upon completion of the internal review process, the county will complete a summary of its findings. The finding of substantially achieved will be at the 95% benchmark to mirror the State and Federal CFSR. If during the internal review process there are questions that arise, the county may contact the Division for further guidance.

VII. Compilation of Results and Preparation of Reports

Upon completion of the internal review process, the county will complete a summary of its findings and determine if a program Improvement Plan is required. Any review findings or concerns about jurisdiction/cross county cases should be referred to the CPR who will provide appropriate consultation.

VIII. Program Improvement Plan Development/Division Follow-up

A Program Improvement Plan (PIP) is required for any outcome that was not substantially achieved. Within thirty days, the Agency will complete, and submit to their CPR, a copy of their PIP to provide consultation and implement strategies to improve the performance. The CPR will monitor the PIP, and monitoring will include case record reviews to determine compliance with the PIP. This is an internal process and Program Improvement Plans should be viewed as opportunities to change findings in practice that will improve outcomes and not be seen as punitive in nature.

IX. Conclusion

The county child welfare system must acknowledge that assessing performance should not be viewed as a one time reflection of practice but accept that findings of areas needing improvements are challenges to enhance practice and not failure

A State CFSR will follow the internal reviews and will be conducted some time between January and June of 2009. A sample of the cases reviewed during the internal reviews will be reviewed during the State CFSR. Pilot counties will include, as part of the Self Assessment, the outcome of each internal review process, the PIP if needed from the internal review, and documentation of any progress toward completion of the PIP.

Refer to the North Carolina Child and Family Services Review Protocol for further guidance and instructions.