

Questions & Answers  
Mecklenburg County Interim Director  
Child Family and Adult Services Department

1. How many reports did Mecklenburg County DSS receive involving Dominique Moody, the home where she lived, her caretakers, or other children in the home?

Mecklenburg County received 13 reports over a 6-year period regarding Dominique.

2. For each report, identify the date, general nature of the allegation, screening decision, and final disposition, to the extent that information may be provided without violating any court order or confidentiality law.

Pursuant to North Carolina General Statute 7B-2902 and 7B-302 and to not be in violation of the Court Order (include 2902 and Superior Court order) the following are dates and the general nature of allegations.

On 12/23/2019-Mecklenburg County received the case from Cumberland County as an assist request. Mecklenburg County accepted the assist. Mecklenburg County completed a Safety Assessment.

In 2020, Mecklenburg County received 3 reports regarding the family. Two of the reports were for physical abuse and neglect while one was an assist request from another County. Mecklenburg County completed a safety assessment as requested by the County. Mecklenburg County accepted two of the cases for investigation or assessment. Mecklenburg County, pursuant to NCDHHS policy, consulted with collaterals and family members. Based on the investigation, Mecklenburg County unsubstantiated the reports. Although Mecklenburg County unsubstantiated, Mecklenburg County referred the family to Child Developmental Services and Care Management for At Risk Children.

Mecklenburg County received one report in 2021. Mecklenburg County accepted the abuse and neglect report for investigation. Mecklenburg County consulted with collaterals. Based on the investigation, the report was unsubstantiated.

There were 3 reports in 2022. Using the Screening and Response Tool, Mecklenburg County screened out two of the reports and accepted one report for investigation. Although Mecklenburg County unsubstantiated the report, Mecklenburg County referred the family for a child medical exam.

Mecklenburg County received one report in 2023. Using the Screening and Response Tool, Mecklenburg County screened out the report.

There were two reports in 2024. Using the Screening and Response Tool formally known as the Screening and Response Tool, Mecklenburg County screened out one report. The other was accepted for family assessment. After consulting with collaterals and based on the assessment, the County concluded that child protective services were not needed.

Two reports were received in 2025. Using the Screening and Response Tool, the County screened out the first report. The second referral was for abuse, neglect and death of child. Mecklenburg County accepted the case for investigation and substantiated the report.

3. Who made, supervised, or approved each screening decision involving this family?

Pursuant to NCDHHS policy, Mecklenburg County follows a two-level decision-making process. This two-level decision involves the intake social worker and a supervisor. Over 6 years, 7 different supervisors reviewed and approved the screening decisions.

4. Why were four out of five screened-out reports involving this family screened out despite meeting the definition of abuse or neglect?

I cannot answer that question definitively and state why a specific decision was, or was not, made at the time. However, per the NCDHHS policy, Mecklenburg County uses the Screening and Response Tool during the intake decision making process. Per the policy, the decision trees are “to guide decisions, not to replace the county welfare worker’s judgment. A case may have unique circumstances not captured by the decision tree/ Screening and Response Tool or there may be critical information that is unknown.” Decisions are made based upon the information received and known at the time.

5. Was CPS history reviewed in each report involving this family? If not, why not?

Yes. Per NCDHHS policy, social workers review the agency history during intake and assessment/investigation. CPS history should be documented in the Assessment/Investigative, Case Decision Form, and the Structured Intake Form.

6. Was Dominique Moody ever seen face-to-face by a Mecklenburg County DSS employee? If so, provide the date, role of the employee, and general purpose of the contact.

Per NCDHHS policy, during assessments/investigations, workers are required to complete observations and contact with the alleged victim child. During each assessment

and investigations, Mecklenburg County CPS workers participated in face-to-face contact with Dominique. The Assessment/Investigative worker assigned to each case visited the home during the open CPS assessment/investigation. The workers visit the home to assess the child's home environment, physical well-being, and safety. Face to Face contacts were conducted ranging from December 2019 through December 2025 including courtesy assist visits and investigation visits.

7. Did any DSS employee enter the home where Dominique Moody lived, and did DSS document the condition of the home?

Yes. Per NCDHHS policy, social workers visit the home to assess the environment during family assessments, investigative cases and courtesy visits and complete a Temporary Safety Plan (TSP).

8. Did DSS assess Dominique Moody's physical condition, weight, hygiene, medical condition, nutrition, development, schooling, or safety?

Yes. Per NCDHHS policy, as part of the assessment/investigation, each time the Social Workers visited the home, there was documentation of Dominique's physical condition and hygiene. Social workers inquired about her medical needs, referred her for developmental services, and inquired about nutritional needs.

9. Did DSS contact medical personnel, school personnel, law enforcement, neighbors, relatives, or other collateral sources? If not, why not?

Yes. Per NCDHHS policy, Mecklenburg County Social Worker's interviewed collateral contacts having additional information regarding the family. During the investigations, the worker's contact service providers, additional family members, and other collateral contacts which may include medical and school personnel and law enforcement.

10. Did DSS ever request a medical examination or forensic medical assessment for Dominique Moody or any other child in the home?

Yes. In 2022, Mecklenburg County referred Dominique for a forensic medical assessment (CMEP) to address her needs. Mecklenburg County has nurses that are assigned to CPS cases. The workers can consult with nurses. As part of the 2022 assessment, the social workers consulted with the nurses regarding Dominique.

11. Did DSS notify law enforcement or the District Attorney regarding any report that may have involved criminal child abuse.

Yes. Per NC DHHS policy, workers are required to notify law enforcement and/or the District Attorney. The notifications to law enforcement occurred on the following dates:

January 31, 2020

May 25, 2021

June 12, 2022

February 27, 2024

Referrals to the District Attorney occurred on the following dates:

May 25, 2021

June 12, 2022

February 27, 2024

12. Did law enforcement notify DSS regarding calls for service to the home?

Yes. DSS was contacted on 4/12/2022 and 12/16/2022 by law enforcement dealing with reports of abuse and neglect.

13. Did DSS have any process to identify or escalate repeated reports involving the same address, same child, same caretaker, or same household?

Yes. Mecklenburg County has a policy and process to identify or escalate certain types of cases.

Mecklenburg County Youth and Family Services (YFS) had a procedure for escalating high-acuity cases to the third level for manager review. This escalation process considered the Child Protective Services (CPS) history of families, specifically those with five or more cases, regardless of the outcomes of those prior cases (e.g., substantiated or unsubstantiated)

14. Has any employee, supervisor, manager, or director been disciplined, resigned, placed on leave, terminated, or otherwise held accountable? If so, identify the position of each employee and the action taken.

1 Senior Social Service Manager- Terminated

1 Social Worker Supervisor - Resigned

1 Senior Social Service Manager- Disciplined

4 Social Worker Supervisors- Disciplined

1 Child Welfare Specialist III- Disciplined

2 Child Welfare Specialist IIs- Disciplined

2 Child Welfare Specialist Is- Disciplined

15. What specific policy, training, supervision, staffing, documentation, or leadership failures allowed this to happen, and what have you changed since Dominique Moody's death that would prevent the same failure tomorrow?

As part of our ongoing efforts to improve our programs, the agency conducts case reviews to assess and leverage our strengths while implementing strategies for improvement in practice. We review all child fatalities involving families with Child Protective Services (CPS) involvement in Mecklenburg County. Additionally, we conduct targeted annual random case reviews across program areas to ensure consistent evaluation of our practices. Furthermore, we are subject to random monthly reviews by the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), which includes federal case reviews as part of the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR). All these opportunities help us enhance the quality of our practices and outcomes in Mecklenburg County's Youth and Family Services (YFS). Of note, Mecklenburg County's last active case with this family was in 2024, and there have been many CPS policy and practice updates since that time.

Unfortunately, we cannot establish any policy or training that would guarantee such a tragic incident will never occur again. No DSS can accomplish that. However, we actively seek to identify practice gaps and opportunities to proactively reduce the risk of child maltreatment and child fatalities in cases that fall under the general statutes. This work is very complex and continuously in a state of flux. Federal statutes, state statutes and policy guidance are consistently changing while social workers are doing the work in real time of keeping the children safe.

Since January 2026, Mecklenburg County has made enhancements to our practices and policies, including reinforcing third-level reviews, strengthening supervisor accountability, expanding expectations for high-acuity abuse cases, improving best practices in the Path NC Case Management Systems (implemented in May 2026), and establishing a plan for ongoing monitoring and continuous quality improvement, with reviews and updates every six months.