



**Joint Legislative Oversight Committee  
on Health and Human Services  
March 8, 2016**

**Department of Health and Human Services  
[Federal Report: Child and Family Services Review]**



# Child and Family Services Review (CSFR)

- Collaborative effort between federal and state governments
- Promotes continuous quality improvement in child welfare systems nationally
- Identifies both strengths and areas needing improvement in state child welfare programs
- Enables states to utilize the information to create strategic plans for improving its child welfare system



# Child and Family Services Review cont.

- N.C.'s last review was conducted in 2007
- The Children's Bureau made several changes to the CFSR process and items and indicators relevant for performance based on lessons learned during the second round of reviews, and in response to feedback from the child welfare field
- As such, a state's performance in the third round of the CFSRs is not directly comparable to its performance in the second round



# Child and Family Services Review cont.

- The third round of the CFSR assesses state performance in regard to seven child and family outcomes, and seven systemic factors
- For a state to be in substantial conformity with the seven child and family outcomes, both the national standards for each relevant statewide aggregate data indicator must be met and 95 percent of the cases reviewed must be rated as having been substantially achieved for each outcome



# Child Welfare Outcomes (7)

- **Safety 1:** Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect
- **Safety 2:** Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate
- **Permanency 1:** Children have permanency and stability in their living situations
- **Permanency 2:** The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children



## **Child Welfare Outcomes (7) cont.**

- **Well-Being 1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs**
- **Well-Being 2: Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs**
- **Well-Being 3: Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs**



# County Case Reviews

- **105 case (59 foster care and 46 in-home cases) reviews were conducted via a State Case Review process in Buncombe, Craven, Cumberland, Durham, Hoke, Jackson, Mecklenburg, Pitt, Scotland, Swain, Wake, and Wilson counties between April 1, 2015 and Sept. 30, 2015**



# Systemic Factors (7)

- **Statewide information system**
- **Case review system to ensure the agency and courts achieve permanency in a timely manner, and families are engaged in the process**
- **Quality assurance system statewide to ensure children are provided quality services that protect their health and safety**
- **Staff and provider training ensures that staff statewide are properly trained to assess cases, and deliver services**





## **Systemic Factors (7) cont.**

- **Service array and resource development that is accessible, and appropriate to meet individualized child and family needs**
- **Agency responsiveness to the community through ongoing consultation with service providers, foster care providers, the juvenile court, and other public and private child and family serving agencies**
- **Foster and adoptive parent licensing, recruitment, and retention**



# Stakeholder Engagement

- **Attorneys including representatives from the Attorney General's Office and County Attorneys**
- **Child welfare agency directors, senior managers, supervisors, and caseworkers**
- **Youth and Foster/Adoptive Parents**
- **Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children (ICPC) staff**
- **Information System staff**



# Stakeholder Engagement cont.

- Licensing staff and representatives
- Quality Assurance (QA) staff
- Court System representatives, including judges, guardians ad litem, and Court Improvement Project (CIP) representatives from education
- Representatives from other state agencies administering federal programs and university social work programs
- Tribal representatives
- Youth served by the agency



# Moving Forward

- On Jan. 11 and 12, prior to the official release of the federal report, efforts began with the convening of over 200 professionals across the state to review the draft report and identify themes for system improvements
- Leadership meetings at all levels have been reviewing the report to set the course for next steps

# Moving Forward cont.

- **Five work themes have been identified:**
  - **Court Collaboration**
    - Issues to timeliness for hearings, including Termination of Parental Rights
  - **County Practice**
    - Helping front-line social workers identify needs and arrange appropriate services
  - **System Infrastructure**
    - Quality Assurance and management oversight
  - **Stakeholder Engagement**
    - Community responsiveness and special populations
  - **Service Collaboration**
    - Access and effectiveness of behavioral health services, domestic violence services, and parenting supports

# Path to Improvement

- The completed two-year plan (due May 2, 2016) will be used as the roadmap for future improvements
- The plan is required by the federal government for states, and must be approved by the Administration for Children and Families
- The Children's Bureau is providing technical assistance during the 90-day development phase
- The plan is being developed as required in conjunction with key stakeholders, including counties (staff from all levels), advocacy professionals, university partners, mental health and medical professionals, foster parents, tribal representatives, youth and their parents, and the legal profession, including the courts

## **Path to Improvement cont.**

- **The plan focus will be on strategies that show improvement in outcomes and systemic factor performances that can be measured**
- **After the two-year plan is implemented, monitoring will follow where goal achievement is measured**

## **Investments Implemented/Underway**

- **Created 73 new state-funded child protective services positions in 30 counties; counties elected to use local funds to hire an additional 50 employees (123 total state/county) to work toward lowering per worker caseloads to recommended one worker per 10 families (\$7.4M)**
- **Increased funding for in-home services focused on child protection and family preservation (\$4.5M)**



## **Investments Implemented/Underway cont.**

- **Hired nine full-time employees to assess county child welfare agencies' practices and protocols for compliance with statutes, rules, and policies**
- **Completed 32 county monitoring visits and all 100 counties will be assessed by June 30, 2016 (\$750,000)**
- **Contracted to assess performance, caseload size, administrative structure, funds and worker turnover for Child Protective Services statewide. Recommendations to G.A. March 1, 2016 (\$700,000)**

## **Investments Implemented/Underway cont.**

- **Launched a pilot program to improve DHHS Child Protective Services data links to law enforcement data with a new tool that assures timely access to sex offender and other critical background information (\$300,000)**
- **Starting next year, through NC FAST, a database will be developed for statewide case management and access to other information and critical programs (\$5.8M) (Plus \$13M next year)**

## **Investments Implemented/Underway cont.**

- **Increased funds available for foster care assistance payments to foster parents, child placement or child care agencies, and child care setting institutions due to increased caseloads (\$5M) (Plus \$12M more over next two years)**
- **Increased the age to 21 for youth in foster care – N.C. is one of 25 states to increase the age to 21 (\$50,000) (Plus \$1M next year)**

## **Investments Implemented/Underway cont.**

- **Developing a demonstration project with Youth Villages that aims to improve outcomes for youth transitioning from foster care through outcome-based Transitional Living Services (\$1.3M) (Plus \$1.75M next year)**

# Future Investments

- **Strengthen workforce capacity and improve/expand workforce education and training programs**
- **Enhance the provision of in-home services and expand the service array available for intact families**
- **Secure and improve access to services for children and their families when served by foster care**



## **Future Investments cont.**

- **Increased support for the foster care system**
- **Improve data quality**
- **Enhance analytical capacity**



# Questions