



# NORTH DAKOTA QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEWS

## AN OVERVIEW FOR CHILD WELFARE WORKERS

**PURPOSE:** The goal of the child welfare system is to promote, safeguard, and protect the overall well-being of children, to intervene on behalf of abused and neglected children, and to work with children and families to assure that every child has a permanent, safe, and nurturing environment in which to achieve their maximum potential.

ND Children and Family Services (CFS) employs the Quality Assurance (QA) Unit to complete QA Case Reviews as one tool to ensure child welfare services achieve these outcomes.

### QA REVIEW HIGHLIGHTS

- A minimum of 65 cases are reviewed each year. The sample is stratified, ensuring each cross-zonal team is represented.
- The CFS QA Unit obtains a random sample of foster care and in-home services cases to review four times a year. Child protective services practice is assessed when present in selected cases.
- The CFS QA Unit contacts caseworkers about 175 cases each review period to gather information regarding the case and to identify who the key case participants (KCP) are for the case. This may include birth parents, stepparents, paramours, foster parents, relative providers, adoption workers, etc. The QA Unit will then reach out to all KCPs to explore their willingness to participate in a confidential interview for the review. All KCPs must be willing to participate in an interview for the case to move forward in the review process unless limited exceptions apply.
- A final schedule is secured identifying the cases to be reviewed and those that will be an alternate case. The case review process includes a review of the case file and phone interviews with all KCPs, including caseworkers.
- All services provided by the ND child welfare agency during a specific Period Under Review (PUR) (a specific time frame that any case practice is assessed) are reviewed. Typically, this is a 12–15 month timeframe.
- The Children's Bureau's Onsite Case Review Instrument is used to review child welfare services, supporting the state's participation in the Federal Children and Family Services Review process. Visit [www.cfsportal.acf.hhs.gov](http://www.cfsportal.acf.hhs.gov) for more details.
- The information from the reviews is used to identify how the state's child welfare system is functioning, not about any one individual worker or agency.
- Results are shared with involved agency workers, supervisors, directors, and field service specialists.

### WHO CONDUCTS THE QA REVIEWS?

CFS QA Unit, which is remotely located throughout the state and all staff are state employees.

### WHAT CAN I EXPECT TO BE ASKED DURING AN INTERVIEW?

Case-related interviews focus on the safety, permanency, and well-being of a specific child(ren). These interviews give you a chance to share how your agency worked with the child(ren) and family and capture information that may not always be in documentation. The information you share is confidential. A final report of the review is provided to your agency but will not identify specific comments from individuals. While the review looks at individual casework practice, agency, and regional practices and supports, as well as state policy, administrative rule, and state law are also assessed.

### DURING THE INTERVIEW, YOU MAY BE ASKED QUESTIONS SUCH AS:

- How did the agency assess for the risk/safety of the child(ren) and address any concerns identified?
- What efforts did the agency make to place siblings together as well as place the child with a relative?
- What efforts were made to achieve timely permanency?
- How often was visitation with parents and siblings occurring and were the child's other important connections maintained?
- How did the agency assess the needs of the child(ren), their parents, as well as the foster parent or pre-adoptive parent? What services were provided to address any identified needs?
- How often did the agency assess the needs of the child(ren), parents, and foster parents and did everyone get the services they needed?
- If the child was on medication, how was the medication monitored?

### QA UNIT STAFF

QA Manager: Leanne Miller

QA Lead Reviewers: Amy Bakken, Nicole Fleming

QA Reviewers: Amy Wesley, Brianna Blue, Dawn Lockrem, Kyle Russell, Tara Krogh, Tanya Howell, Tonya Canerot

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