

## **NEWS from the North Dakota Department of Human Services**

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### **N.D. child welfare outcomes improve substantially**

BISMARCK, N.D. – The federal Administration for Children and Families notified the North Dakota Department of Human Services that the state's child welfare system is one of the first in the region to successfully complete its performance improvement plan. North Dakota has raised its score on the 23 items in the federal Child and Family Service Review from 83 percent in 2001 to 98.3 percent in 2005, said department Executive Director Carol K. Olson.

"I am pleased with the work that has been done and continues to be done at the local level to better serve children and families," she said.

Beginning in 2001, federal officials made site visits to every state to review performance. As a result, all states developed plans for improving services to children in foster care or at risk of out-of-home placements and their families. States that do not achieve planned improvements face fiscal penalties.

North Dakota undertook a number of improvements including successfully implementing "wrap around case management," which provides coordinated services and supports from social services, the juvenile corrections system, schools, the medical community, counties, family members, friends, and others to meet the unique needs of children and families. The department also adopted a Single Plan of Care so that families no longer have to deal with multiple care plans from multiple agencies, and the state established a self-assessment process that mirrors the federal review in order to regularly monitor performance.

Thomas Sullivan, regional administrator for federal Administration for Children and Families, notified the state that it had met its performance improvement requirements. "We commend the state for its commitment and leadership in advancing the safety, permanency, and well-being of children and families," he said.

Paul Ronningen, the state's Children and Family Services Division Director, credited child welfare professionals at county social service offices and regional human service centers, along with state staff for the accomplishment.

"I really want to thank the frontline workers who provide child welfare services in this state for their efforts to improve services to children and families," Ronningen said.

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