



NC Department of Health and Human Services

North Carolina Child Welfare Family Leadership Model

Children's Services Committee Presentation
by State/County Staff and Family Partners
February 13, 2019

Overview

- **Highlights of Our Story**
- **Child Welfare Family Leadership Model**
- **County and Family Partner Experiences**
- **Vision Ahead**

*After meeting, Family Partners will be in
the lobby for additional questions*

How We Got Here

North Carolina History

- MRS/Family-Centered Programming
- SAYSO Model for Securing Youth Voice
- Required Family Voice in Many Community Based Funded Programs

2015 CFSR Key Experiences

- Interview Rates for OSRI
- Agency Responsiveness to Community Systemic Factor
- Stakeholder Assessment Interviews
- Family Voice in PIP Development Meetings

Child Welfare Family Leadership Model

- **Model co-created with families, counties, state, national and other child-serving system partners**
- **Tier model of readiness for engagement**
- **Connection and information sharing between Tiers is key**
- **North Carolina Child Welfare Family Advisory Council (CWFACT) is already informing case level changes**

Forsyth County
“Looking at readiness as something both families and social workers need to think about.”

Family Engagement Committee Meetings

Forsyth County has invited families and social workers to sit at the table together.

- What has been the best thing about bringing these two groups together?***
- What has been the most challenging thing about bringing these groups together?***

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Forsyth County
How do we hope to expand this work?

- **Include families in monthly conversations at our Family Engagement Committee meetings**
- **Develop and host additional café events for families and workers**

Durham County
“How do we find families who are ready to sit at the table with child welfare?”

Using a parent café to support readiness

Durham County is working to recruit and support family members who are willing to partner with child welfare.

- What does child welfare need to think about when preparing families to join them in meetings?***
- How did the parent café help prepare Durham County for bringing families to the table in your Family Engagement Committee?***

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Durham County
What is next?

- Establishing plan for “feedback loop” for those families who participated in the café.
- Educational event to help families understand the role and expectations for those who are interested in membership on the Family Engagement Committee

Richmond County
“What does it take to develop a peer program to help families during the CFT process?”

Developing a Parent Partner CFT Program

Richmond County is developing a Parent Partner Program to provide peer support during CFT meetings.

- What does it mean to provide peer support to families involved with child welfare?***
- Why are family partners important to Richmond County and the services you want to provide?***

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**Richmond County
Lessons Learned**

- Training needs identified with Family Partners.
- Training and skills development are important in order to define roles and support expectations
- Staff identified for family partner engagement is key
- Over-recruit families



Importance of Training

- Why is training important for family partners to help family partner be prepared for working with child welfare?
- How can family partner involvement in training support case practice?

Vision Ahead

- Continue state-level Child Welfare Family Advisory Council (CW FAC)
- Learn from pilot counties' experiences
- Develop training for families to support readiness
- Take the next year and apply implementation science principles to this work
- Learn more at session during the Prevent Child Abuse conference
- Look for *Practice Notes* article

For More Information

Deborah Day, DHHS| DSS

Community-Based Programs Administrator

Deborah.Day@dhhs.nc.gov

919-527-6436

Kara Allen-Eckard, NCSU | CFFACE

Community Developer

krallene@ncsu.edu

919-515-5511

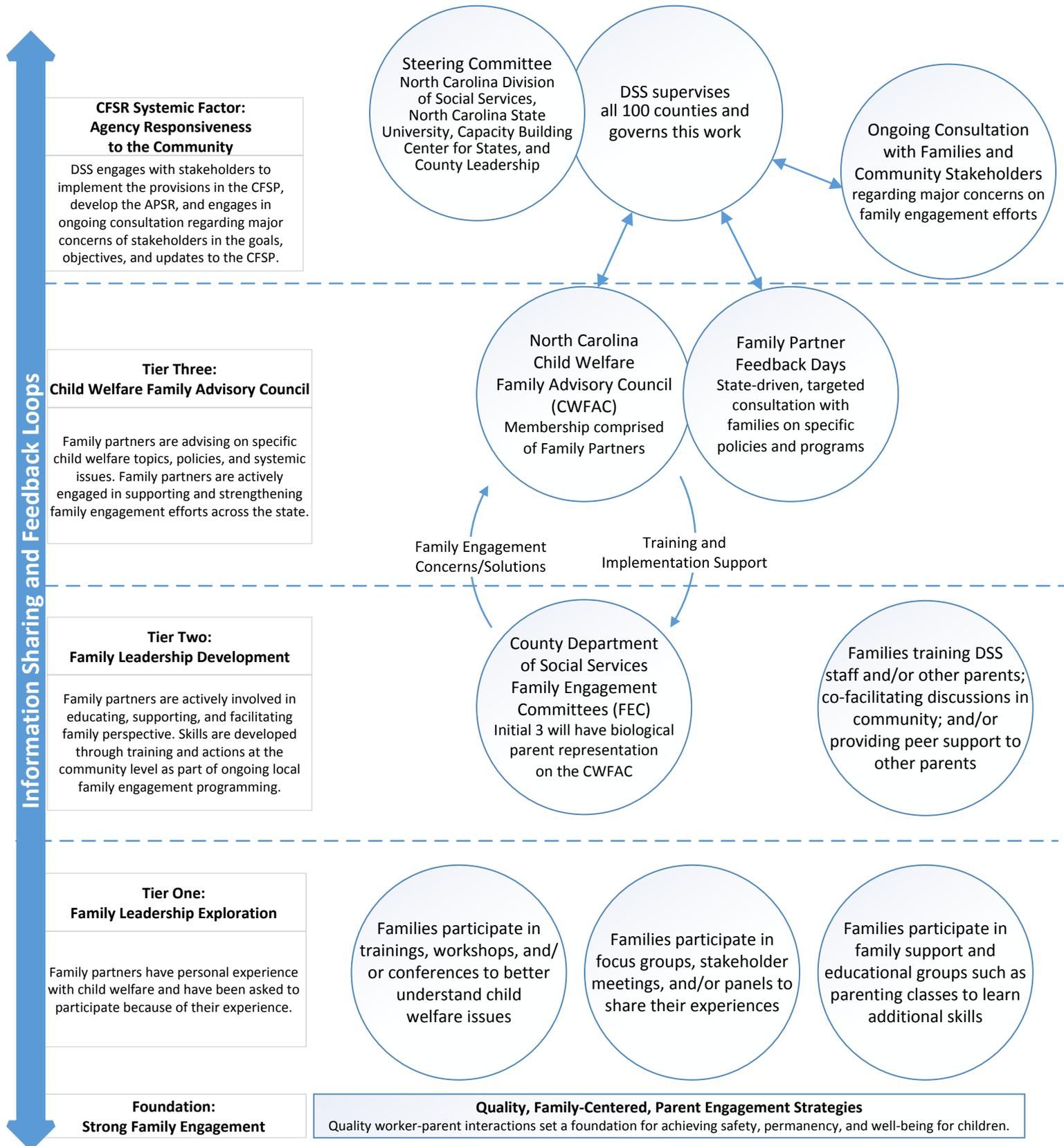
THANK YOU!

Family Partners will be in the lobby after the meeting and are happy to share more information and respond to your questions.

North Carolina Child Welfare Family Leadership Model

North Carolina Division of Social Services (DSS) recognizes that families served by the child welfare system play an integral part of program development, implementation, and evaluation. The North Carolina's Child Welfare Family Leadership Model ensures that family voice informs state-level decisions and aligns county family engagement/leadership approaches with state-level system efforts.

Last updated October 8, 2018



A **Family Partner** is defined as a youth or adult who has received services or is the caregiver/parent of someone who has received services and who has firsthand experience with the child welfare system. Therefore, when we refer to *Family Partners* we are speaking of both youth and adults.

A **Family Engagement Committee (FEC)** is defined as a group of individuals comprised of biological parents who have been involved in the child welfare system - along with other families and community stakeholders - at the county level who come together to discuss, implement, and support strategies to improve family engagement and permanency for children.



North Carolina Child Welfare Family Leadership Model

KEY COMPONENTS

- State-Level Child Welfare Family Advisory Council
- County-Level Family Engagement Committees
- Family Leadership Development Tiered Structure
- Systemic Engagement of Child Welfare Families

CHILD WELFARE FAMILY ADVISORY COUNCIL

The North Carolina Child Welfare Family Advisory Council (CWFAC) is a state-level council to provide parents and youth opportunities to be full partners in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of child welfare services. The state-level council is comprised of young adults with former experience with the child welfare system, biological parents who have received child protection services, foster parents, adoptive parents, and kinship parents.

Launched in April 2018, the purpose of the CWFAC is to promote and support the involvement of families at case practice, policy, and system levels. The CWFAC has quickly become an integral part of informing how DSS leads child welfare activities across the state. The CWFAC will work in concert with the county Family Engagement Committees (FECs) to strengthen family engagement across all child welfare program areas and improve child and family outcomes in North Carolina.

CWFAC will have 12 members including:

- Two (2) Former Foster Youth
- Two (2) Kinship Parents
- One (1) Adoptive Parent
- One (1) Foster Parent
- Six (6) Biological Parents

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEES

A Family Engagement Committee (FEC) is a group of individuals at the county level who come together to discuss, implement, and support strategies to improve family engagement and permanency for children. FECs are a *Tier Two* activity of the North Carolina Child Welfare Family Leadership Model that builds upon *Tier One* activities in each county.

Each FEC is comprised of biological parents who have been involved in the child welfare system - along with other families and community stakeholders - committed to improving services for children, youth, and families.

FECs meet at least quarterly as a formal mechanism for ongoing consultation from families so county leadership can respond to feedback and strengthen programming as needed.

FAMILY PARTNER DEFINED

A family partner is defined as a youth or adult who has received services or is the caregiver/parent of someone who has received services and who has firsthand experience with the child welfare system. Therefore, when we refer to *Family Partners* we are speaking of both youth and adults.

FAMILY LEADERSHIP EXPLORATION (TIER ONE)

Families with personal experience with the child welfare system are asked to participate in activities.

- Families participate in trainings, workshops, and/or conferences to better understand child welfare issues
- Families participate in focus groups, stakeholder meetings, and/or panels to share their experiences
- Families participate in family support and educational groups such as parenting classes to learn additional skills

FAMILY LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT (TIER TWO)

Families are actively involved in educating, supporting, and facilitating family perspective.

- Families serve on Family Engagement Committees (FEC)
- Families training DSS staff and/or other parents; and/or co-facilitating discussions in community
- Families providing peer support to other parents

CHILD WELFARE FAMILY ADVISORY COUNCIL (TIER THREE)

Families are actively involved in educating, supporting, and facilitating family perspective.

- Families are advising on specific child welfare topics, policies, and systemic issues
- Families participate on various state-level stakeholder committees to represent family voice

CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES REVIEW (CFSR) SYSTEMIC FACTOR: AGENCY RESPONSIVENESS TO COMMUNITY

DSS engages with families to implement the provisions in the Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP), help develop the Annual Progress and Services Report (APSR), and engages in ongoing consultation regarding major concerns they may have in the goals objectives, and updates to the CFSP.

Highlights as of February 2019

CWFAC MEMBER CONTRIBUTIONS TO DATE

- Helped develop Family Leadership Programming through participation on the Program Improvement Plan (PIP) Workgroup
- Participated in a two-day Joint Planning meeting with the Children's Bureau
- Provided input into the revisions to the handbook given to biological parents
- Facilitated Community Cafés for parents
- Participated in state-level committees (Community Child Protection Team Advisory Board; FosteringNC.org Oversight Committee; Health Oversight and Coordination Plan Revision Team, and the Driver's License Pilot Workgroup)
- Provided input on NC FAST case planning and visitation forms
- Provided input into the Monthly Foster Care Contact Record and Monthly In-Home Services Contact forms
- Provided input into the Policy Manual revisions
- Provided consultation to support the county Family Engagement Committee development
- Attended monthly lunch and learns and core training events
- Provided feedback into the 2019 Annual Progress and Services Report (APSR)
- Provided input into the evaluation of CWFAC/FEC
- Provided input into the KinGAP materials

IMPLEMENTATION HIGHLIGHTS

- CWFAC members are selected by a formal application process
- CWFAC members complete a readiness and skills assessment
- CWFAC are required to attend a set of core trainings
- CWFAC meetings are held every other month (6 times a year)
- Family Partner Feedback Days are held during the alternate months (6 times a year) - designed to give DSS feedback on specific policies, procedures, or practices
- Monthly Lunch & Learns (12 times per year) - designed to help prepare families for upcoming meetings or strengthen their knowledge about various topics
- Three counties are piloting FECs (Durham, Forsyth, and Richmond)
- At least three biological parent slots on the CWFAC are from the pilot FEC counties
- Charters were established for the CWFAC and FECs to guide the work and provide accountability
- FECs meet at least quarterly
- Strong evaluation developed for CWFAC and FECs
- CWFAC serve on various other child welfare statewide committees and/or stakeholder advisory boards

TRAINING REQUIRED FOR CWFAC MEMBERS

Below are the required trainings for CWFAC members in year one:

- Where Does Your Story Fit Video developed: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s_527fAcZ84&feature=youtu.be
- Recognizing and Responding to Child Abuse & Neglect (www.preventchildabusenc.org/services/trainings-and-professional-development/rrcourse)
- Child Welfare Overview (fosteringNC.org/cw101)
- DSS 101: Orientation to NCDHHS, DSS, CW Section
- Understanding the Child & Family Service Plan (CFSP), Annual Progress and Services Report (APSR), and Child and Family Services Review (CFSR)
- My Story Matters (Strategic Sharing)
- Child Welfare 101: CPS Intake (Online Module)
- Child Welfare 101: CPS Assessment (Online Module)
- Child Welfare 101: CPS In-Home Services (Online Module)
- Child Welfare 101: Permanency Planning (Online Module)

Below are the required trainings for CWFAC members in year two:

- Step by Step: Child and Family Teams (2-day Training)
- Strengthening Families | Protective Factors Training
- Social Styles and Collaboration Skills
- Coaching and Facilitation Skills

DURHAM COUNTY UPDATE

The focus of Durham County FEC is biological parent engagement, family involvement in CFTs, and support to kinship families. The Durham County FEC convened a Community Café in December 2018 to get input from families involved in Child Protective Services and recruit additional members to their FEC. Two state-level CWFAC members are supporting the Durham County FEC activities and the family partners recruited.

FORSYTH COUNTY UPDATE

Forsyth County FEC convened a Community Café in August 2018 to get input from families involved in Child Protective Services and recruit additional members to their FEC. The Café model was a success. Forsyth County FEC is considering holding Community Cafés twice a year as a mechanism to learn from the experiences of families and have an ongoing Family Partner recruitment mechanism in place.

RICHMOND COUNTY UPDATE

Richmond County FEC is comprised of biological families and community members. The Richmond County FEC is supporting the developing of a Peer Support Partner Program. Peer Support Partners will be matched during the CFT process with families who do not have a robust support system. Peer Support Partners will increase family engagement by helping families understand the case planning process.

North Carolina Child Welfare Family Advisory Council Membership

Barbara Young

Child Welfare Family Advisory Council member since April 2018

Barbara Young is a member of the Child Welfare Family Advisory Council as an adoptive parent. Barbara became involved with the CWFAC because she wants to be part of the continuing conversation in child welfare about how to be truly family-centered. She believes that a family driven, youth guided approach for all families is important to successful outcomes. Barbara became involved with child welfare when she was licensed as a foster parent. She was invited to partner with Alamance DSS as a MAPP foster parent trainer to help engage other families who were interested in fostering children and youth. Shortly after becoming a trainer, she began working on a grant with the Alamance Alliance as a Family Partner helping families of young children with social and emotional challenges. Upon completion of the grant, she was asked to work with Alamance DSS as a Family Partner helping families who had an open CPS case. Her work provided families support to navigate the requirements of the child welfare system and help connect families to community resources. In her role at Alamance DSS, Barbara was exposed to policy and practice involved with open CPS cases. This gave her a greater understanding for how to build bridges between policy and practice. As a member of the CWFAC, she wants to highlight the need to build relationships and to genuinely listen to families when seeking solutions for how to support safe and healthy family environments. In addition to her involvement with the state level child welfare advisory work, Barbara has been supportive of the new Foster Family Alliance and is a member of the FosteringNC.org Steering Committee.



North Carolina Child Welfare Family Advisory Council Membership

Barry Ginn

Child Welfare Family Advisory Council member since May 2018

Barry Ginn is a member of the Child Welfare Family Advisory Council as a foster parent. Barry became involved with the CWFAC to help inform the policy and practice that guides partnerships between foster parents and their biological families that are so important to healthy child development. Barry feels that being a foster parent is one small way he and his family can support children and their families. Barry and his family recognize that their role as a temporary home for children is an important part of helping families achieve the goal of providing healthy environments for their children. Barry has been supportive of the new Foster Family Alliance and is a member of the FosteringNC.org Steering Committee. Both of these groups support the educational and resource needs of kinship caregivers, foster, and adoptive parents. As a foster and adoptive parent in Wilson County, Barry helps potential new foster parents understand the responsibilities of the role by co-facilitating the Caring for Children Who Have Experience Trauma: A Workshop for Resource Parents. This is a 16-hour, in-service training – referred to as the Resource Parent Curriculum (RPC), is designed as an in-service training for all resource parents (kinship, foster, adoptive, and therapeutic). He is passionate about educating and supporting families in understanding how trauma impacts children, youth, and families. Barry believes that trauma training provides a foundational understanding for how to care for and nurture children in out of home care. Understanding children and youth using a trauma informed lens helps caregivers develop resiliency skills in children that help them thrive in their homes and communities. In this role, he hopes to help advocate for trauma informed education for all parties involved with child welfare.



North Carolina Child Welfare Family Advisory Council Membership

Gina Brown

Child Welfare Family Advisory Council member since April 2018

Gina Brown is a member of the Child Welfare Family Advisory Council as a kinship caregiver. Gina became involved with the CWFAC because she recognized the unique challenges kinship caregivers face when trying to care for their family members. She was the primary caretaker of her granddaughter for over nine years and recently helped transition her to independent living. Gina believes that authentic input from families and communities is necessary to improve the processes and procedures related to child welfare. Prior to membership on the CWFAC, she was an active member of the Program Improvement Plan (PIP) workgroup charged with designing the North Carolina Child Welfare Family Leadership model. She is a current member of the state Community Child Protection Team Advisory Board and supported DSS in the design of the Transportation Really Is Possible (TRIP) program which supports foster youth in getting their driver's license. Gina enjoys research and believes that research and data are necessary to inform proactive solutions and to understand how to implement evidence-based programs and policies. Her passion is safe, happy, and loving families, which does not always require a DNA connection. As a kinship caregiver, and a mother of four stepchildren, Gina is a testament to developing relationships that keep families connected. In this role, Gina wants to make a difference for other families trying to navigate the system to care for their family members. She shares that although she cannot change the world, she can always do things to move forward and make the world better, no matter how big or small the change.



North Carolina Child Welfare Family Advisory Council Membership

Gustavo Smith

Child Welfare Family Advisory Council member since April 2018

Gustavo Smith is a member of the Child Welfare Family Advisory Council as a biological parent and is the primary caregiver for two young daughters. He became involved with the CWFAC because he believes there is a greater need for family voice, especially fathers, in child welfare policy and practice discussions. He wants to help establish ways for professionals to engage family input and develop programs that are inclusive of the family perspective. In addition to his involvement with the state level child welfare advisory work, Gustavo also provides support for the development of DSS county Family Engagement Committees. Prior to becoming a CWFAC member, Gustavo served as an at-risk youth, community, and fatherhood advocate with the Greensboro Housing Authority, Children's Home Society, and NC Baby Love Plus. In addition, Gustavo worked on a grant funded project providing sexual health education to minority adolescent males. He has many interests within child welfare, but is particularly interested in informing parent engagement, cultural competency, and improving services for fathers. Gustavo would like to eventually own a transitional home for youth 18-26 who are aging out of the foster care system. He would like to be a resource for youth who face homelessness by providing programming that helps them build their confidence while pursuing higher education, employment, and permanent housing.



Teka Dempson

Child Welfare Family Advisory Council member since April 2018

Teka Dempson is a member of the Child Welfare Family Advisory Council as a biological parent. She became involved with the CWFAC because, as the mother of a son with life challenges and the aunt and kinship caregiver for two nephews, she brings life lessons not learned in a school setting that are important to share with child welfare. Both caregiver roles found her asking questions about resources, policies, and requirements that she needed to understand to take care of her children. The journey wasn't easy, but it sparked a hidden passion to help change huge systems so they better serve families. As a member of North Carolina Families United and board member for the National Federation for Families, Teka has a long history of providing family perspective to child serving systems. In her role as family partner advocate, she joined the Program Improvement Plan (PIP) workgroup charged with designing the North Carolina Child Welfare Family Leadership model. She was excited to see child welfare embrace systemic change to engage the voice of families. In addition to her involvement with the state level child welfare advisory work, Teka also provides support for the development of DSS county Family Engagement Committees. Teka sees the CWFAC as an opportunity to understand and educate about the "why's and how's" of the child welfare system and to help child welfare understand the "why's and how's" of families. Teka is passionate about supporting other parents, caregivers, and youth in being a part of system change and progress. She has helped DSS see the importance of getting families to the table so they are "not only engaged, but invested!" This speaks to the partnership she hopes to see grow between child welfare and the CWFAC.



North Carolina Child Welfare Family Advisory Council Membership

Tera McCullough

Child Welfare Family Advisory Council member since April 2018

Tera McCullough is a member of the Child Welfare Family Advisory Council as a biological parent of two children. Tera is involved with the CWFAC to make sure the child welfare system can truly benefit families by creating a mutual understanding for how families and child welfare can work together. Prior to membership on the CWFAC, Tera was an active member of the Program Improvement Plan (PIP) workgroup charged with designing the North Carolina Child Welfare Family Leadership model. In addition to her involvement with the state level child welfare advisory work, Tera also provides support for the development of DSS county Family Engagement Committees. These FECs are designed to bring biological parents to the table to discuss DSS family engagement needs and program recommendations. Tera brings additional perspective to the table from her experience working with families to help them obtain food stamps, Medicaid, and child care. Tera is invested in making sure that families and youth are supported in their efforts to inform and guide the child welfare system. One of her main areas of focus is identifying and supporting Family Partner readiness and resources to help family and youth participation in child welfare system level discussions.

