



News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE –
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N. C. Certified a ChildFirst State, Cumberland County DSS Will Lead Training

FAYETTEVILLE, N.C. – The Cumberland County Department of Social Services has completed the certification to make North Carolina a ChildFirst state. Cumberland County DSS took the lead in the training to make North Carolina the 18th state in the nation to be ChildFirst certified.

ChildFirst is a forensic interview training and education program designed to reduce emotional trauma for abused children and achieve a more favorable court outcome for young victims. The training is for social workers, law enforcement officers, attorneys, medical professionals and any other people who work with child victims of abuse.

Cumberland County DSS is now the training agency and host site to train agencies in all other North Carolina counties. ChildFirst has trained 72 people representing 17 counties throughout the state.

Mary McCoy, Children Services Program Manager at Cumberland County DSS, is the coordinator for ChildFirst in North Carolina. She said Cumberland County DSS initiated the ChildFirst training here.

“Cumberland County definitely led the way by coordinating the meetings, providing the training site, the coordinator and some of the training materials,” McCoy said. “It better prepares people to effectively interview children and provides the knowledge and research needed to defend their interviews in court.”

The ChildFirst certification process began last August and was completed in June. Cumberland County DSS partnered with the Child Advocacy Center of Fayetteville, Cumberland County Sheriff’s Office, Fayetteville Police Department, Cumberland County Schools, and Bladen and Hoke County departments of social services. CornerHouse, along with the National Child Protection Training Center in Winona, Minn., established the ChildFirst program.

“We are the training site for ChildFirst in North Carolina and we are working toward making ChildFirst accessible to all 100 counties in North Carolina,” McCoy said. “We are hoping to take our training program on the road to the western and northeastern parts of the state.”

For more information on ChildFirst training, contact McCoy at (910) 677-2443 or marymccoy@ccdssnc.com.

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