

	Division of Family and Children Services Child Welfare Manual	Chapter: Out of Home Care Section: Effective Date:
		Previous Policy #:

Implementing Concurrent Permanency Plans

POLICY NUMBER:

CODES

Georgia Code 15-11-58
Public Law 96-272 (Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act) and Public Law 105-89 (Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997)

REQUIREMENT

The Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS) will concurrently implement the primary plan of reunification and the alternative permanency plans by actively/intensively working towards both permanency plans.

PROCEDURE

The Permanency SSCM will:

1. Provide intensive services and/or refer the birth family/caregiver for intensive services, based on the Family Case Plan goals and other assessed/emerging needs:
 - a. Ensure that service provision and referrals are done in a timely manner,
 - b. Follow up with service providers to ensure timely initiation of referrals and provision services:
 - i. Must ensure regular contact with the service provider to include phone, email, mail, or face to face.
 - c. Follow up with the birth family/caregiver to ensure compliance with referrals and services; or to assess whether services are meeting their needs; or are being provided.
 - i. Must ensure regular contact with birth family/caregiver to include face to face, phone, email, and mail correspondence
2. Concurrently implement the alternative plan:
 - a. Fully implement the alternative plan while the family is working towards reunification.
 - i. Identification and placement of child with the resource parents. (see Concurrent Planning - Identifying a Resource Family)
 - ii. Ongoing discussion with resource parents regarding the

- alternative permanency plan selected and commitment to permanency for the child if reunification fails.
 - iii. Documentation of all efforts to reunify the child with the birth parents/caregivers.
 - iv. Adhere to specific goals and steps identified in the Family Case Plan relating to the alternative permanency plan for the family.
(See Practice Guidance and Concurrent Planning Practice Handbook, Chapter 4, Concurrent Planning and Case Process)
3. Implement visitation plan
 - a. Ensure that the birth family/caregiver and resource parents are knowledgeable regarding the visitation expectation;
 - b. Ensure that any barriers to visitation have been discussed and resolved i.e. Location, schedule, transportation, etc.
 4. Document in Georgia SHINES within 72 hours: Contacts/Summaries Tab.

PRACTICE GUIDANCE

Implementation of the Alternative Permanency Plan

Alternative permanency plans for concurrent planning include adoption, permanent guardianship or permanent custody with a fit and willing relative. When implementing the alternative plan, the actions necessary will depend on the alternative plan that was selected. Some examples:

1. If the alternative plan that is selected is adoption, then much of the work required in the implementation of this alternative plan involves:
 - a. thorough documentation of intensive efforts towards reunification and the birth family/caregiver's compliance with case plan goals;
 - b. the birth family/caregiver and relative caregiver are fully aware of case status and understands that filing for non-reunification will occur if reunification efforts fail;
 - c. collecting the required information for the adoption process including the legal case building for termination of parental rights.
 - d. starting the life book for the child
2. If the alternative plan is guardianship, the SSCM will ensure:
 - a. thorough documentation of intensive efforts towards reunification;
 - b. the birth family/caregiver and resource parents (including relative caregivers) are fully aware of case status and the steps for filing a guardianship petition should reunification efforts fail;
 - c. the resource parent (including relative caregiver) is knowledgeable of supports available through the subsidized guardianship program.
3. If the alternative plan is permanent custody with a fit and willing relative, the SSCM will ensure:
 - a. thorough documentation of intensive efforts towards reunification and the birth family/caregiver's compliance with case plan goals;
 - b. the birth family/caregiver and relative caregiver are fully aware of case status and understands that filing for non-reunification will occur if reunification efforts fail;
 - c. the relative caregiver is knowledgeable of the available supports from DFCS; and, is ready, willing and able to care for the child, should reunification fails.

The SSCM must ensure the case documentation is thorough and reflects the

following:

1. Intensive efforts are being made to reunify the child with the birth family/caregiver;
2. Efforts to locate relatives and other committed individuals;
3. The birth family/caregiver is provided with opportunities to maintain a bond with the child, though increased visitation, and;
4. The resource parents are engaged and are fully prepared to be a permanent resource for the child/children should reunification efforts fail.

Refer to the Concurrent Planning Practice Handbook, Chapter 4, Concurrent Planning and the Case Process

REFERENCES

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