

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

Reviewing 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 review the primary permanency plan of reunification and the alternative permanency plan in concurrent planning cases on a quarterly basis:

1. To determine the level of progress made toward the reunification goal
2. To determine whether it is appropriate to finalize the alternative permanency plan.

PROCEDURE

The DFCS Permanency SSCM will review the progress towards the primary permanency plan and the alternative permanency plan.

1. Conduct ongoing assessments of the families progress towards achievement of goals and activities:
 - a. Assess parents' participation in services/supports and activities that were identified to address the Family Case Plan goals.
 - i. Review reports from service providers and others working with the family.
 - ii. Assess supports offered/provided by the resource parents and that the birth parents have been actively engaged in partnership parenting with the resource parents.
 - iii. Assess parental behaviors, not promises.
 - iv. Assess appropriateness of the child's placement:
 1. Are child's needs are being met in regards to safety and well being?
 2. Are the resource parents supporting the reunification efforts by participating in partnership

- parenting, visitation with birth family, etc.
3. Are the resource parents committed to permanence for the child should reunification efforts fail?
 - v. Progress and change should be observable, verifiable and documented.
 - b. Assess parental compliance with parent/child visitation.
 - c. Adhere to time limits for movement or completion of goals and activities are used to ensure that the case moves forward quickly.
 - d. Also ensure that any required steps for the alternate plan are addressed and that barriers are addressed in a timely manner.
2. At a minimum, on a **quarterly basis**, review the families' progress toward achieving goals and activities.
- a. Utilize the FTM process to
 - i. Review permanency goals, address barriers and provide additional support for the family.
 1. Discuss progress made, family strengths and newly identified needs.
 2. Discuss parent/child visitation, supports provided to birth family to visit the child more frequently, and relationship with resource family.
 - ii. Provide full disclosure to all parties including birth and resource family, SAAG, etc., regarding progression of Family Case Plan and status of reunification and concurrent goals.
 - iii. Discuss that a timely, permanent home is in the best interest of the child (ren).
 - iv. Discuss lack of progress in achieving goals:
 1. Assess any barriers to achieving goals and strategies that can be utilized to overcome these barriers.
 2. Consider taking steps to finalize the alternative permanency plan, IF the family has not made sufficient progress towards reunification goals.
 - (a) Provide information regarding next steps for finalizing the alternate permanency plan.
 - (b) Engage the family team in modifying the Family Case Plan for the alternate permanency plan as needed.
 - (c) Engage the family in identifying ways in which they support the alternate plan.
 3. Discuss post permanency communication, if appropriate. (Concurrent Planning Practice Handbook, Chapter 5)
3. Communicate to Juvenile Court:
- a. When there are changes in placements,
 - b. Services/Supports being provided to address Family Case Plan goals,

- c. Progress made toward reunification goals and projected timeframe for reunification,
- d. Lack of progress toward reunification goals,
- e. Decision to pursue alternative permanency goals:
 - i. Work with SAAG to ensure timely legal action on:
 - 1. TPR, if Adoption is the alternative permanency plan
 - 2. Non-reunification if Permanent Custody with a Fit and Willing Relative is the alternative permanency plan.

Note: The actions taken will depend on which alternative goal was selected (adoption, permanent guardianship, permanent custody with a fit and willing relative, etc.)

- 4. Document in Georgia SHINES
 - a. Update Child and Family Case Plan,
 - b. Family Team Meeting Tab
 - c. Contacts/Summaries Tab, within 72 hours

PRACTICE GUIDANCE

DOCUMENTATION

Concurrent Planning requires meticulous documentation of all actions related to assessment, development, implementation and review of the primary permanency plan of reunification. The SSCM and Supervisor must ensure that every attempt to provide services, visitation or any other interaction, must be thoroughly documented. This includes:

- 1. The families' response to services, as well as their efforts and progress in meeting goals.
- 2. Detailed documentation of parent/child visits including the level of interaction, parenting opportunities, etc.
- 3. Documentation of all face to face, telephone, email and mail correspondence to birth families, relatives, resource parents, service providers, etc.
- 4. Reports and referrals to and from service providers, schools, etc. must be documented.

QUARTERLY REVIEW OF CONCURRENT PERMANENCY PLANS

Quarterly reviews are to be conducted for all concurrent planning cases. The review should be completed through use of a Family Team Meeting to ensure family engagement in the planning, development and implementation of the primary plan of reunification as well as the alternative permanency plan.

Please refer to the Concurrent Planning Practice Handbook, Chapter 4, for more detailed information regarding the quarterly reviews.

(3-Month Review)

The purpose of the initial 3 month review is to assess the progress of the concurrent permanency plan, assess status of placement with resource parents, assess visitation plan and implementation and identify any barriers to achieve reunification goals, and or alternative permanency plan.

(6-Month Review)

The purpose of the 6-month review is to continue assessing the progress of the concurrent permanency plans, placement/resource family status and visitation. During this review, both the primary and the alternative permanency plans are being fully assessed. If sufficient progress has not been made towards reunification based on specific time limits in the Family Case Plan, the alternative permanency plan should be explored during the FTM to determine whether specific actions should be taken towards finalization. If decision is made at the 6-month review to finalize the alternative permanency plan, court approval is needed. This review should occur a minimum of two weeks prior to the Review Hearing to ensure family engagement in the planning and recommendations.

NOTE: Services for the birth family must continue, until Court approval is received to discontinue the reunification goal.

(9-Month Review)

The purpose of this review should be to finalize the permanency plan for the child, whether it is reunification or the alternative permanency plan. Review the services that are in place and whether they are assisting the family towards their goals as well as whether additional services are needed. The progress towards reunification goals must be clearly documented. This review should specifically address permanency goals and whether reunification efforts are to continue, or whether the alternative permanency plan should be finalized, in preparation for the permanency hearing. Some issues to consider is whether a non reunification order needed, what action is needed if TPR is being pursued, etc.

(12-Month Review)

This review should be held at least two weeks prior to the permanency hearing. The review should address recommendations for the permanency hearing based on the family's compliance with reunification services and any aftercare plans that family may need if reunification is likely. If reunification is unlikely due to the birth families lack of progress with permanency goals, and the alternative plan is being pursued, this review should then focus on addressing issues to move forward with finalizing the alternative permanency plan.

(Ongoing Quarterly)

Ongoing quarterly reviews should focus on reassessing goals, addressing barriers to timely permanency and on finalization of the primary permanency plan or the alternative permanency plan.

REFERENCES
