

EFFECTIVE

December 1, 2010.

SUBJECTS

1. Permanency planning conferences (PPC).
2. Glossary of PPC terms.
3. Engaging incarcerated parents in the service plan.

**1) PERMANENCY
PLANNING
CONFERENCE (PPC)**

FOM 722-6B

Introduction

Permanency Planning Conferences (PPC) represent a family-centered, strength-based and team-guided decision making process designed to produce the optimal decisions concerning a child’s safety, placement and permanency. Permanency planning conferences include child welfare staff, parents, caretaker(s), foster parents (of the children in foster care) and may also include extended family, friends, neighbors, community-based service providers, community representatives or other professionals involved with the family. The inclusion of children and youth at PPCs is addressed within this policy; see Children and Youth Participants. The parents and child are encouraged to invite family, friends and/or other people they view as supportive or influential in their lives.

During the PPC, participants work together to create a plan for safety, placement and permanency tailored to the individual needs of each child. This process establishes a forum to share ideas and opinions, embraces the importance of the family’s perspective and involvement, stresses full participation of all attendees, encourages honest communication and promotes dignity and respect for all participants.

**Events Requiring
PPC**

PPCs are conducted to make or recommend critical case decisions. PPC referrals are made once a caseworker and the supervisor determine a need. When a need has been determined, the PPC referral must be made immediately. After it is held, the event necessitating the PPC must occur within 45 calendar days or a new one must be held.

Certain circumstances or events and stages of a case progression **mandate** PPCs must occur within the required time frames as outlined below:

Emergency Removal

The CPS worker must make a PPC referral when a child is removed from his/her home. The appropriate staff must schedule it no later than the next business day or prior to the completion of the preliminary hearing.

Considered Removal

The CPS worker must consult with the supervisor whenever the removal of a child from a parent's or guardian's home is in question. If the worker and supervisor are considering removing the child from the home, the PPC referral must be made immediately. PPC staff must schedule the PPC no later than two business days from the referral. It must be held prior to removal and placement of the child, unless an emergency occurs.

Change of Placement

The supervising agency may immediately change the child's placement if there is reasonable cause to believe the child has suffered sexual abuse or non-accidental physical injury or that there is a substantial risk of harm to the child's emotional well-being within a foster parent's or relative caregiver's home; see FOM 722-3, Reasons for Replacement. The assigned worker must make an **immediate** referral to the PPC staff, who must schedule the PPC meeting no later than the next business day after receipt of the referral.

For any other type of replacement, the assigned worker must make a PPC referral prior to providing the foster parent/relative caregiver with the DHS-30, Foster Parent Notification of Move. In cases where the child is a Michigan Children's Institute (MCI) ward and the caregiver has expressed an interest in adopting, the MCI superintendent must be consulted prior to the change in placement; see FOM 722-3, Reasons for Replacement. The PPC must occur prior to the child's change in placement. If the foster parent/relative caregiver has appealed the intended replacement to the Foster Care Review Board, the child must not be replaced until a final decision is made by the Foster Care Review Board, court or MCI superintendent.

In instances where a foster parent, relative or unrelated caregiver requests that a child be moved from their home, the procedures below must be followed:

- The assigned DHS/placement agency foster care (PAFC) worker must make a referral for a replacement PPC immediately.
- PPC staff must schedule a PPC meeting to occur no later than 3 business days after a verbal or written request for the child to be replaced.
- If the child already has been replaced, the PPC meeting must still occur within 3 business days.

Note: For mental health hospitalizations, a PPC for change of placement is only required if the plan **does not** involve returning the child to the previous placement. If the decision is not to return the child to the previous placement, the PPC must be held no later than 3 business days after the decision has been made.

Reunification

A PPC referral must be made when the assigned worker decides, in conjunction with the supervisor, to commence consecutive overnight parenting time preceding reunification.

PPC staff must schedule the PPC to occur before the first multiple overnight parenting time begins. If the court orders a child returned home before a PPC can be held, a PPC must be held no later than 2 business days after the date of the court order.

Permanency Goal Change

A referral must be made when the assigned worker decides, in conjunction with the supervisor, during the course of the case that the permanency goal may change. PPC staff must schedule the PPC to occur before the next court hearing and preferably within five business days of the receipt of the request, unless the family would prefer a later date. The PPC must be held prior to any change in goal and must be held before the assigned worker asks the court to approve the new goal.

Note: A PPC for a permanency goal change may be combined with a child in care for nine months conference.

Child Returns from Absent Without Legal Permission (AWOLP) Status

A PPC must be held as soon as possible, but no later than 2 business days after a child returns to placement after being AWOLP.

Child in Care for Nine Months

A PPC referral must be made by the assigned worker when a child has been in care for nine months with a goal of reunification, and sufficient progress has not been achieved to ensure reunification within 12 months. The PPC must be held as soon as possible after the nine-month mark, but no later than 30 business days after this date.

Note: A child in care for nine months PPC may be combined with a permanency goal change conference.

Child Legally Free for Adoption

A PPC referral must be made by the assigned foster care worker when a child has been legally free for adoption for three months, but does not have a permanent placement identified. The meeting must be held within 30 business days after three months have elapsed since termination of all parental rights. A pending appeal does not alter these time requirements.

Note: Children with identified adoptive placements do not require a PPC. These children will be tracked through entry into the MARE module in SWSS.

Other

PPCs or case conferences may be held at other times during an open case, as dictated by circumstances and departmental policy.

**Requesting a
Permanency
Planning
Conference**

Once the assigned caseworker and supervisor determine a need for a PPC, a written request shall be made to the PPC facilitator or other designated staff person by completing section A of the DHS-969, PPC Referral Report. When multiple agencies are providing services to the family and child or children, the agency required to conduct the PPC is the following:

Emergency Removal

The agency that will remove and/or place the child.

Considered Removal

The agency that will remove and/or place the child.

Child Replacement

The agency that has responsibility for the child.

Reunification

The agency that has responsibility for the family.

Permanency Goal Change

The agency that has responsibility for the family.

Child Returns from Absent Without Legal Permission status

The agency that has responsibility for the child.

Child in Care Nine Months

The agency that has responsibility for the family.

Child Legally Free for Adoption

The agency that has responsibility for the child.

The PPC facilitator or other designated staff person will:

- Log the date, time and name of the requestor.
- Discuss with the requestor the reason for the meeting.
- Request contact information of participants invited to the meeting.
- Determine with the requestor any special accommodations and needs of the participants.

Location of a PPC Meeting

PPCs must occur at a location which is best for parents and children. They must be held at the local DHS or private agency office when safety concerns arise or a participant's special needs must be accommodated.

Scheduling

Prior to scheduling the PPC, every effort must be made to consider the family’s availability prior to determining the meeting time.

In scheduling the PPC, the PPC facilitator or other agency staff involved in the scheduling process shall not discuss specific case information with participants prior to or after the PPC except the information necessary to schedule it.

**PPC Facilitator
Responsibilities
Prior to PPC**

The PPC facilitator must complete the following activities in scheduling the meeting:

- Setting up the date and time as mandated in policy.
- Arranging an appropriate meeting site. This includes arranging for any special accommodations or safety needs.
- Discussing with the assigned caseworker additional participants that may be needed (such as, service providers, foster family, community representatives, tribal representatives).
- Coordinating efforts with the assigned caseworker to notify all participants of the scheduled time, place and date.
- Coordinating efforts with the assigned caseworker to contact birth parents to ensure they are aware that they may invite others for support to the PPC.

**Caseworker
Responsibilities
Prior to PPC**

Prior to a PPC, the assigned caseworker must:

- Request the conference after a case conference with the supervisor. A PPC is considered to be requested on the date the DHS-969, PPC Referral Report, is turned in to the facilitator or designated staff with section A, Caseworker Section, completed.

- Make diligent efforts to notify participants and others of its date, time, and place.
- Provide verbal information about the meeting process to participants and others invited to attend.
- Encourage parents and children to identify and invite support persons they would like to attend.
- Identify and resolve any barriers to participants attendance at the PPC, such as transportation, work schedules and issues surrounding daycare; see Special Needs/Reasonable Accommodations in this item.

**Special Needs/
Reasonable
Accommodations**

In order to promote the safety, well-being, and successful participation of all participants, reasonable accommodations must be provided when inviting an individual with a special need. A participant's special need may include, but is not limited to:

Transportation

The caseworker must explore transportation options with families who identify this as a barrier.

Child Care

The caseworker must explore available child care options with the family in order to ensure all primary caretakers are able to attend the PPC. The caseworker must ensure that child care is arranged prior to the meeting.

Adaptations

The caseworker must explore available options when a family member needs additional assistance in order to participate. These could include a foreign language interpreter, interpreter for the hearing-impaired, wheelchair access, or phone access for an incarcerated parent.

Note: For more information about securing a foreign language interpreter; see AHJ 1021, Bilingual Interpreter Services. See AHJ 1314, Effective Communication for Persons Who are Deaf and

Hard of Hearing, for information on interpreters for the deaf or hearing impaired.

**Inviting and
Notifying
Participants**

Once scheduled, the assigned caseworker, PPC facilitator and clerical support staff must coordinate efforts to invite participants and invitees to the meeting. Notification of the date, time and place of the meeting can be provided by any reasonable method including mail, telephone, verbal notification.

**PPC Notification
Guidelines**

Participants are identified people that must be invited to all mandated PPCs. Participants include:

- Parents, if parental rights have not been terminated.
- Foster parents and/or relative (licensed or unlicensed) caregivers.
- Children, if of an age to participate.
- Family members, friends or other supports identified by the parents and the children.
- Tribal representatives, for Indian children.
- Service providers as appropriate.
- Caseworker(s) including, but not limited to, FIS/ES, CPS, foster care, adoption, licensing, placement agency foster care and DHS monitor involved with the family.
- Assigned caseworker's supervisor.
- If a case is supervised by a placement agency foster care worker, the DHS monitor should attend. If unable to participate in person, the monitor, supervisor, or other DHS designee must make arrangements to be available by conference call.
- In all cases, and regardless of who is initiating the conference, all agency caseworkers involved with a family must be invited to attend all PPCs. Reasonable efforts must be taken by the

caseworker initiating the meeting to locate and contact all other caseworkers.

- All PPCs held for children eligible for adoption must include notification to and involvement of the adoption worker.
- A child’s lawyer-guardian ad litem must be invited to attend all PPCs. A PPC should not be delayed due to the unavailability of the lawyer-guardian ad litem to attend the meeting.
- The assigned caseworker, facilitator, or clerical staff should also invite community and tribal representatives, service providers, extended family members, school personnel and any and all other individuals who may have knowledge of or be able to provide support to the family.
- If requested by the parents, their attorney must be allowed to attend. The parent must be advised to notify his/her attorney of a scheduled PPC. As these meetings are not a legal venue or proceeding, they cannot be used as a method of executing legal documents (including but not limited to affidavits, personal protection orders, agreements to divorce, guardianships, etc.).
- If the caseworker has made reasonable efforts to notify a participant, a PPC may be held without the attendance of a participant, except that a parent must attend a reunification PPC. If a parent does not attend a scheduled reunification PPC, it **must** be postponed to secure the parent’s attendance.

**Incarcerated
Parents and PPCs**

Foster caseworkers must provide prior notice to an incarcerated parent for the following PPCs only:

- Considered removal.
- Change in permanency goal.
- Child in care for nine months with goal of reunification.

Note: If circumstances permit, agencies may arrange for an incarcerated parent’s participation in other types of PPCs.

The caseworker must provide and document notice to the incarcerated parent by mail or telephone. The caseworker must contact the facility and ask that the parent be allowed to participate in the PPC by phone. If time allows, the caseworker must send a copy of the

DHS-968, Permanency Planning Conference Attendance Report, and ask the parent to sign and return it. The caseworker must also notify the parent’s attorney of the meeting, and the attorney must be allowed to attend.

The caseworker must ensure the incarcerated parent receives copies of the DHS-969, Permanency Planning Conference Referral Report, the DHS-971, Permanency Planning Conference Activity Report, and the DHS-968, Permanency Planning Conference Attendance Report, following each PPC.

**Children and
Youth Participants**

All children age 11 or older must be invited and allowed to attend. The caseworker must evaluate, on a case-by-case basis, whether attendance would be harmful to a child’s safety or well-being. For a child younger than age 11, the caseworker and their supervisor may determine if it is appropriate for the child to attend all or a portion of the PPC. If the child, age 11 or older is not invited, the reasons must be documented in the narrative section of the DHS-969 and the case service plan.

Security

The caseworker and facilitator must discuss any security needs and safety concerns prior to the PPC in order to ensure adequate security at the meeting site. Family members may be excluded if they pose a credible safety threat to the group or if attendance would violate a personal protection order, no contact-bond, probation, parole, or other court order. In some of these cases, a telephone conference must be explored.

All participants must be provided with security information whenever a PPC will include the attendance of a family member with a history of violent or threatening behavior.

Domestic Violence Cases

In domestic violence cases, if the batterer is present, arrangements must be made to ensure the non-offending parent’s and child’s safe arrival and departure from the meeting location. If a personal protection order mandates that the parties must not come in contact, the possibility of a telephone conference must be explored, if not in violation of the court order. The caseworker and his/her supervisor must carefully evaluate a decision to exclude a parent and discuss that decision with the facilitator. Additionally, the

caseworker and supervisor should evaluate the child's attendance based on safety.

Confidentiality

The confidentiality of information shared at the PPC must be addressed. Privacy and respect are emphasized, but parents must be informed that information from the meeting may be used for case planning, in subsequent court proceedings if necessary, and in the investigation of a new allegation of abuse or neglect should such information arise.

Confidentiality Statement

At the time of the PPC, the facilitator must explain the meeting process and read the DHS-966, PPC Information Sheet, and DHS-967, Ground Rules. The parents are requested to sign a confidentiality statement which is included on the DHS-968, Permanency Planning Conference Attendance Report. The facilitator must explain confidentiality as it pertains to the PPC.

The confidentiality statement allows the parent(s) to give permission for specific information regarding their case to be discussed for the purpose of the PPC. If a parent refuses to sign, the meeting will continue. Staff must be fully aware that specific information as outlined in SRM 131, Confidentiality, is not open for discussion unless the parent reveals the confidential information.

PPC Process

The PPC process consists of the following steps provided by the facilitator:

Introduction

- Welcome.
- Provide each participant with a copy of the DHS-966, PPC Information Sheet. The facilitator will read the information sheet aloud to ensure all participants understand the purpose of the PPC.
- Ensure all participants sign-in on the DHS-968, PPC Attendance Report, with the parents signing the confidentiality statement.

- Introductions.
- Statement encouraging participation and desire to work together to develop best possible plan for family and child(ren).
- Statement that all options will be heard and considered.

Ground rules

The facilitator must provide each participant with a copy of the DHS-967, PPC Meeting Ground Rules, and read the ground rules aloud to the participants. The facilitator will:

- Ask the participants to agree to the ground rules.
- Ask for questions.
- Acknowledge any issues that cannot be addressed in the PPC.
- Ensure an understanding of limitations of confidentiality and privacy.
- Facilitate an atmosphere to encourage openness and honesty and allowance for all participants to be heard.

Issue identification

During this phase of the meeting, the issues and/or concerns placing the child(ren) at risk must be discussed.

- The facilitator must ask the parents if they wish to initiate the discussion by sharing information about their family or their understanding of the current situation.
- The assigned caseworker may introduce the structured decision-making tools (safety and/or risk assessments for CPS and reunification and/or safety assessments and permanency planning tree for foster care). The assessment tools identify issues that place the child(ren) at risk and strengths upon which the team may build.
- Issues identified will lead the team discussion.
- The caseworker may present services that have been provided and the family’s progress with the services.
- The facilitator may find the need to paraphrase, ask open-ended questions, remind people of the ground rules, allow

expression of feelings, summarize, and use other techniques to promote and support the meeting process.

- The facilitator must maintain the focus on the issues of safety and protection of the child(ren) and ensure the assigned worker has had ample opportunity to present all the issues that place the child(ren) at risk.

Brainstorming

During the brainstorming phase, all participants and invitees offer ideas toward possible solutions to the issues placing the child(ren) at risk. The assigned worker must take the approach that all ideas warrant consideration during the brainstorming phase. The facilitator may need to clarify thoughts, encourage innovation and creativity, summarize ideas, etc. Ideas discussed during the brainstorming phase may be listed (on easel, chalkboard) for all participants to view.

Decision

After all ideas for possible solutions have been presented, the facilitator must ensure each idea has been considered and move the team towards consensus by setting a positive tone and identifying the expectation that the group is capable of reaching a consensus.

The assigned worker assists the group by:

- Considering the merit of each idea.
- Exploring consequences and reality testing for each option.
- Determining if the idea provides safety and protection for the child(ren).

The facilitator must explain that while consensus is the goal, DHS must make a decision if a consensus cannot be reached. If a consensus cannot be reached, the applicable DHS agency representative discusses the reasoning for the decision by providing the specific rationale. During the process, the facilitator establishes the agreement is based on the safety and protection of the child(ren) in the least intrusive and least restrictive manner.

Consensus does not imply unanimity, but the facilitator must demonstrate that a quality decision has been reached. The decision reached during the PPC must comply with state and federal laws, DHS policy and licensing rules. If a consensus cannot be reached, the DHS representative makes the decision regarding placement related issues at hand.

Placement

If the decision is to remove the child(ren) from the home, the facilitator must open the discussion of alternative out-of-home placement options. Various options must be given thoughtful consideration along with the child(ren)'s wishes. In considering placement options, special attention must be given to issues such as:

- Sexually acting out, violent or assaultive behaviors.
- Separation issues.
- Mental health concerns.
- Medical needs.
- Continuity of relationships, family, school.
- Any other special needs identified.

Note: The placement selection criteria detailed in FOM 722-3 must be considered when making placement decisions.

Once the out-of-home placement has been decided, the facilitator must reconfirm this conclusion with the group and document it on the PPC Activity Report. Recommendations made for placement are contingent upon court authorization, home study and appropriate clearances. The facilitator must make the group aware of these contingencies.

Safety plan/action steps

Upon reaching a decision, the safety plan/action steps must be specified. The facilitator must clearly and specifically identify the safety plan/action steps for each participant. The purpose of a safety plan is to ensure the safety and well-being of children where there is a risk of abuse or neglect. The safety plan/action steps must be documented on the DHS-971, PPC Activity Report. Guidelines for formulating a quality safety plan may include:

- Parents and caregivers having the prominent role in the development of the safety plan.
- Time limited (within a 30-day time frame) and measurable action steps.
- Specific statements regarding caseworker's action steps to reduce risk factors and monitor the safety plan.

- Face-to-face contacts and home visits must correlate with policy and SDM assessment levels that indicate the frequency of contact with family and child(ren).
- Specific, identified services that are accessible within the family’s community.
- Action steps addressing parenting time as outlined in policy; see FOM 722-6.
- If placement or replacement with a relative is the safety plan, an appropriate home study must be completed; see FOM 722-3, Placement with a relative. Action steps must include the person responsible for the home study and time frame for completion.
- If reunification is the decision, see FOM 722-7 Reunification.
- Participants identified with a role in the safety plan must complete the action steps within the specified time frame.
- The safety plan must reflect the decision of the team at the time of the PPC.
- Supervisory follow-up, for service referrals designated to the assigned worker, is required within thirty calendar days. The follow-up must also be documented in the PPC database.

Recap/closing

At the close of the meeting, the safety plan/action steps must be used to confirm the decision of the team. The facilitator must:

- Reiterate the team’s decision.
- State the safety plan/action steps for each participant.
- Outline the criteria for measuring success.
- Acknowledge all participants’ roles.
- Identify tasks requiring supervisory follow-up by checking the appropriate boxes indicating assigned worker tasks on the PPC Activity Report.

- Provide a copy of the DHS-971, Permanency Planning Conference Activity Report, to each participant and the assigned caseworker's supervisor.
- Ensure that the emotional needs of the family are sufficiently addressed with assistance from the assigned caseworker.

Throughout the meeting, the facilitator is responsible for conducting the PPC according to training guidelines and policy. The facilitator must:

- Ensure every participant signs in on the DHS-968, PPC Attendance Report, explains confidentiality to the group, and introduces themselves to the group prior to commencement of the PPC.
- Provide each participant with a written copy of the DHS-966, PPC Information Sheet, DHS-967, PPC Ground Rules, and DHS-965, PPC Satisfaction Survey.
- Document the family strengths and needs.
- Complete the DHS-971, PPC Activity Report, documenting the team's decision, safety plan, action steps, time frame for completion and person responsible for the task.
- Ensure each participant is provided with a copy of the PPC Activity Report.
- Ensure concurrent permanency planning is discussed during the PPC and any plans are clearly documented on the DHS-971, PPC Activity Report.
- Request each participant complete the DHS-965, PPC Satisfaction Survey, at the conclusion of the meeting.
- Provide recap of the meeting and closing comments.

**Caseworker PPC
Responsibilities**

During a PPC, the caseworker shall:

- Present agency recommendations, including any recommendations based on child and family needs, safety assessments and permanency assessments.

- Clearly and respectfully identify risks to the child.
- At a considered removal or emergency removal PPC, explain any concurrent permanency planning considerations to the parents.
- Remain open to participants' and others' ideas about permanency alternatives and safety planning.

Note: If a parent does not attend, the caseworker must advise the parent as soon as possible of the outcome and provide a copy of each document which includes the DHS-969, DHS-971, and DHS-968.

**Post-PPC Process
(PPC Activity
Report
Requirements)**

Following the PPC, the facilitator is responsible for completing the DHS-969, PPC Referral Report, checking it for accuracy and recording the outcome data. The facilitator must document in the narrative section of the PPC database, the information regarding safety concerns and planning as documented in the DHS-971. A copy of the DHS-971, PPC Activity Report, must be provided to all participants (in person and by phone). The original of each completed document which includes the DHS-969, DHS-971, and DHS-968, must be given to the caseworker requesting the PPC. A copy of each document must be provided to the legal parents. These documents must also be filed in the foster care and/or the child protective services case record(s) under the narrative section.

**Data Entry and
Self-Evaluation**

The PPC database allows for the collection of information about the PPC meetings throughout the state. It includes the data necessary to evaluate both state and local progress in achieving goals. It does not duplicate the information stored on other child welfare case management systems. The facilitator (or designated staff person) must enter the PPC Facilitator Referral and Activity Report information into the database following the PPC or within seven business days. The PPC Web Database User Guide used for instructions on entering the information is located in the juvenile justice data system (JJOLT).

The DHS-965, PPC Satisfaction Survey, must be given to PPC participants to gather voluntary information about the quality of the PPC and/or satisfaction of the participants. This information is used by staff to self-monitor the process.

**Information Shared
after a PPC**

Participants in the PPC must contact the facilitator and/or case-worker immediately if information that could affect the decision becomes available afterward. All relevant parties must receive the additional information and the caseworker, in consultation with their supervisor, must make a decision to:

- Continue with the current case plan.
- Implement an alternative plan.
- Request a new permanency planning conference.
- Request an administrative review.

**Administrative
Review**

Any DHS or placement agency foster care staff person who participates in a PPC may request an administrative review if a clear safety or policy violation is identified.

A written request for administrative review identifying the reason for the request must be sent to the local office director or services section manager. An administrative review must be conducted as soon as possible, but no later than 1 business day after the request is received. All PPC participants must be notified of, and invited to, the administrative review. A decision reached at the PPC must be suspended until the administrative review is completed. If necessary, an interim safety plan must be implemented.

During the administrative review, the person who requested the review provides a PPC summary and the reason for the administrative review. The review administrator (appointed by DHS) may request additional information in order to clarify the situation. The review administrator makes the final decision to either affirm or overturn the caseworker's decision. The review administrator may also determine alternative safety or permanency plans. During the process, the review administrator completes the DHS-963, Administrative Review Activity Report. At the conclusion of the administrative review, the caseworker must notify all participants of the decision. The decision of the administrative review is final.

2) GLOSSARY OF PPC TERMS

Absent Without Legal Permission

A child or youth under court or department jurisdiction who has left his/her placement without legal permission or has failed to return to placement when required.

Caseworker

The supervising agency worker with direct case service responsibilities. The individual may be a Children's Protective Services, foster care, or adoption worker.

Community Partners

Agencies that are providing professional services to the family or have expertise regarding an issue to be addressed at a PPC.

Community Representatives

Knowledgeable members of the family's community that serve as support and offer non-traditional resources.

Concurrent Permanency Planning: The process of working towards the goal of reunification, while at the same time, developing an alternative permanency plan for the child should reunification efforts fail. Concurrent permanency planning involves considering all reasonable options for permanency at the earliest possible point following the child's entry into foster care and concurrently pursuing those that will best serve the child's needs.

Consensus

Agreement with or support of a decision by all participants. If consensus is not achieved, the department maintains the legal responsibility and authority to make the decision.

Considered Removal

A removal which may become necessary and placement of child(ren) in out-of-home care if an adequate safety plan cannot be implemented.

Domestic Violence

The occurrence of any of the following acts by a person that is not an act of self-defense: causing or attempting to cause physical or mental harm to a family or household member; placing a family or household member in fear of physical or mental harm; causing or attempting to cause a family or household member to engage in involuntary sexual activity by force, threat of force, or duress; and/or engaging in activity toward a family or household member that would cause a reasonable person to feel terrorized, frightened, intimidated, harassed, or molested.

Emergency Removal

A removal in which a child or children are placed in out-of-home care on an emergency basis, including after hours or on-call situations.

Facilitator

A trained DHS or placement agency foster care child welfare supervisor or services specialist who manages the PPC process. A facilitator must possess a bachelor's degree and a minimum of 2 years of experience in front line child welfare work.

Invitee

A person who is invited to the PPC but is not required to attend, such as attorneys, community partners/community or tribal representatives, etc.

Lawyer-Guardian ad Litem

An attorney appointed by the court to represent a child.

Placement Agency Foster Care

A private agency contracted by the department to provide direct foster care services.

Participant

Persons who must be notified of and allowed to participate in all required PPCs. Participants are the parent(s) (if parental rights have not been terminated); foster parents or relative caregivers; children, if of an age to participate; family members, friends, tribal members or other supports identified by parents and children;

service providers, as appropriate; the caseworker; and the caseworker's supervisor.

Permanency Planning Conference (PPC)

A family-centered meeting conducted to produce the optimal decisions concerning a child's safety, placement and permanence. The meeting includes the parent(s)/caretakers, extended family, friends, neighbors, foster parents, service providers, community representatives, and/or other professionals involved with the family. PPCs are designed to encourage participants to share information about the family, relating to the protection and safety of the child or children and to the overall functioning of the family as it pertains to placement and permanence. They are held to make or recommend critical case decisions. The meetings are used on a mandatory basis for consistency and accountability to create safety, placement and permanency plans for the following circumstances and stages of a case:

- Prior to placement, or by the next working day after an emergency placement.
- Prior to the replacement of a child in foster care to a different placement setting, or by the next working day after an emergency replacement.
- Prior to reunification.
- Prior to a change in the permanency goal.
- When a child returns from absent without legal permission status.
- When a child has been in care for nine months with a goal of reunification, and sufficient progress has not been achieved to ensure reunification within 12 months.
- When a child has been legally free for adoption for three months but does not have a permanent placement identified.
- PPCs may be held at other times during an open case, as dictated by circumstances and departmental policy.

Permanency Planning Conference Activity Report (DHS-971) and Permanency Planning Conference Referral Report (DHS-969)

Documents used to record all necessary information relating to the PPC.

Removal

Requirement of out-of-home placement for the child or children for safety and protection. Removals fall within two categories: emergency or considered.

Reunification

A process that begins the preparation for the return of the child or children to the parent(s)/caretaker from which the removal occurred.

Unrelated Caregiver

An adult who is not related to a child by blood or marriage who has a psychological/emotional bond with the child and is identified as family as a result of their active role in the functioning of the nuclear family.

Reason: Dwayne B. v Granholm, et al. consent decree; see L-10-025-CW, Permanency Planning Conference Implementation.

**3) ENGAGING
 INCARCERATED
 PARENTS IN THE
 SERVICE PLAN**

FOM 722-6 Foster Care-Developing the Service Plan

**Incarcerated
 Parents**

The foster care worker must make reasonable efforts to identify and locate an incarcerated parent. An incarcerated parent may provide important information about the child and any available relatives that may be able to provide placement and support for the child.

Resources

The foster care worker must use, but is not limited to, the following resources to locate an incarcerated parent and identify services available at a jail or prison:

- For parents under the jurisdiction of the Michigan Department of Corrections, <http://www.michigan.gov/corrections>.
- For parents in federal prisons, <http://www.bop.gov/>.
- For parents in out-of-state facilities, <http://www.vinelink.com> or by contacting the facility.

For parents in county jails, contact the county facilities directly.

Verifications

Once an incarcerated parent is located, the foster care worker must confirm the incarcerated parent's charge or conviction offense, prison or jail number, parole or release eligibility, and earliest release date. In cases where reunification is the permanency goal, the foster care worker must engage the parent in the service plan regardless of how long that parent will be incarcerated.

Required Contact & Service Plans

The foster care worker must make monthly contact with the incarcerated parent face-to-face, if at all possible, or through letter and phone contact. The foster care worker must send a letter to the incarcerated parent with the parent's prisoner number on the envelope. The letter must:

- Ask the parent whether he or she wishes to remain a parent to the child, and to identify any relatives who may be interested in placement.
- Explain the purpose of the service plan.
- Solicit the parent's views of his/her needs and strengths.
- Note the services and work opportunities available within the facility to the parent.
- Ask the parent to describe his or her plan to provide care and custody of the child upon release from incarceration.

- Ask the parent to add the foster care worker to his or her call list so that the parent and worker may communicate via telephone.

The foster care worker must assess the incarcerated parent's needs and strengths and document them in the DHS-145, Family Assessment of Needs and Strengths.

The foster care worker must determine the services and work opportunities available within the facility in which the parent is incarcerated. Once the foster care worker determines what services are available, the appropriateness of these services will be assessed in relation to the parent's identified needs. The services available, if they appropriately meet the parent's identified needs, must be documented in the DHS-67, Parent-Agency Treatment Plan and Service Agreement (PATP). Foster care workers are not required to arrange for service providers outside of the facility to deliver services within the facility but may utilize such services if they are currently available within the facility.

Once the DHS-67, Parent-Agency Treatment Plan is completed, the parent must be given an opportunity to review and sign the plan. The foster care worker must send two copies of the plan to the incarcerated parent. An accompanying letter must clearly request that the parent sign one copy and return it to the foster care worker and keep the other copy for the parent's reference. In addition, the foster care worker must enclose a DHS-1555-CS, Authorization to Release Confidential Information, and request the parent to sign and return the form. This will allow the worker to verify the parent's compliance with the service plan through contact with service providers and prison records. The foster care worker must evaluate an incarcerated parent's compliance with, and benefit from, services in the same manner as non-incarcerated parents. Workers must obtain proof of a parent's compliance with, and benefit from, services from the parent and service providers.

If the parent has been paroled or released from incarceration, or will likely be paroled in the near future, the foster care worker must identify any additional services the parent needs prior to reunification with the child, and update the service plan accordingly. If the incarcerated parent has been convicted of or substantiated for criminal sexual conduct against a child, see FOM 722-12, Expenditure of State Funds in Substantiated Sexual Abuse Cases, before proceeding with efforts to reunify a child with the parent after his or her release from incarceration. A court order may be required.

Unless parenting time or contact would be harmful to the child or there is a no-contact order in place, the foster care worker must arrange for regular visits or contact between an incarcerated parent and the child. Alternatives to regular visitation at a jail or prison facility may be contact via letters sent through the worker or phone contact.

Reason: Foster care program office recommendation and court ruling.

FOM 722-7 Foster Care- Permanency Planning

MCR 2.004 requires the petitioner in a child protection proceeding to notify the court that a party to the proceeding is incarcerated by the Michigan Department of Corrections (MDOC). When a foster care worker or the department’s legal representative files a supplemental petition requesting termination of parental rights in a case involving a parent incarcerated by the MDOC, the petition must contain a clause stating “A telephonic hearing is required pursuant to MCR 2.004.” The clause must also contain the parent’s prisoner number and location. If a parent is incarcerated in a county jail or a prison or jail in another state, the court may determine how the parent will participate in the hearing, but the supervising agency is not required to raise the issue in the petition.

Reason: Foster care program office recommendation and court ruling.

FOM 722-8 Foster Care- Initial Service Plan

Policy revisions include instructions to refer back to FOM 722-6 regarding information about engaging incarcerated parents. Incarceration is no longer a reason for a parent’s non-participation in service planning.

Reason: Foster care program office recommendation and court ruling.

FOM 722-8A Foster Care- Family (Re)Assessment of Needs and Strengths

Policy revisions include instructions to refer back to FOM 722-6 regarding information about engaging incarcerated parents. Any mention of incarceration as being a reason for non-participation in service planning has been removed.

Reason: Foster care program office recommendation and court ruling.

FOM 722-8C Foster Care- Parent-Agency Treatment Plan and Service Agreement

Policy revisions include instructions to refer back to FOM 722-6 regarding information about engaging incarcerated parents.

Reason: Foster care program office recommendation and court ruling.

FOM 722-9 Foster Care-Updated Service Plan

Policy revisions include instructions to refer back to FOM 722-6 regarding information about engaging incarcerated parents. Any mention of incarceration as being a reason for non-participation in service planning has been removed.

Reason: Foster care program office recommendation and court ruling.

**MANUAL
MAINTENANCE
INSTRUCTIONS**