
OVERVIEW

Concurrent permanency planning (CPP) is the practice of working towards reunification while simultaneously establishing an alternative plan for permanent placement. CPP emphasizes reunification efforts by providing support, structure, and clear time lines to families while keeping the focus on the child's need for safety and permanence. CPP must never be used to circumvent or limit reunification efforts; caseworkers must diligently pursue reunification, however if the Juvenile Court determines that reunification is not possible the alternative plan is implemented. Simultaneously developing two permanency plans for a child reduces the number of foster care placements and allows permanency to be achieved in a timely manner.

Federal Law**The Adoption Safe Families Act of 1997 (ASFA), P.L. 105-89**

Emphasizes moving children safely and quickly from the uncertainty of foster care to the security of a safe and stable family. In order to achieve timely permanency for children it may be necessary to develop, communicate, and work simultaneously on two types of plans. ASFA requires agencies to make reasonable efforts to find permanent families for children in foster care should reunification not occur and these efforts could be made concurrently with reunification efforts.

State Law**Probate Code, 1939 PA 288, MCL 712A.19(12)**

Reasonable efforts to finalize an alternate permanency plan may be made concurrently with reasonable efforts to reunify the child with the family.

Probate Code, 1939 PA 288, MCL 712A.19(13)

Reasonable efforts to place a child for adoption or with a legal guardian, including identifying appropriate in-state or out-of-state options, may be made concurrently with reasonable efforts to reunify the child and family.

**CONCURRENT
PERMANENCY
PLANNING
COMPONENTS**

Concurrent permanency planning includes multiple components, each of which contributes to the overall objective of achieving timely permanency. Components of effective concurrent permanency planning include:

- Individualized and early assessment of the core conditions that led to out-of-home placement and the strengths of the family; see FOM 722-08A, Family Assessment of Needs and Strengths.
- Identification of absent parents; see FOM 722-06G, Efforts to Locate Absent or Putative Parents.
- Diligent relative search and engagement; see FOM 722-06B, Relative Engagement and Placement, and PSM 715-2, Relatives.
- Family Team Meetings; see FOM 722-06B, Family Team Meeting.
- Full disclosure of Plan A and Plan B; see Plan A and Plan B in this item.
- Front loading services; see Front Loading Services; see FOM 722-06, Case Planning.
- Enhanced parent/child contacts; see FOM 722-06I, Maintaining Family Connections.
- Identification of a concurrent permanency goal; see FOM 722-07, Permanency Goals and *Plan A and Plan B*, within this item.
- Identification of a Plan B caregiver to achieve the concurrent goal; see Plan B Caregiver in this item.
- Effective and timely court reviews; see FOM 722-10, Court Review.
- Ongoing evaluation of progress; see FOM 722-09, Updated Service Plan.

FULL DISCLOSURE

Full disclosure is the process of open and honest communication between the caseworker and all parties (parents, relatives, foster parents, etc.) about the concurrent permanency planning process. The caseworker must ensure full disclosure with the parties by:

- Having open and genuine communication regarding the child welfare process and the CPS and foster care case.
- Promoting early permanency through reunification as the primary goal and most preferred outcome.
- Introducing the process of concurrent permanency planning to the parties as early as possible, but no later than the first Case Plan Reassessment Family Team Meeting; see FOM 722-06B, Family Team Meetings.
- Explaining to parent(s) the negative impacts of out-of-home placement on the child and the importance of obtaining permanency timely.
- Explaining parental rights, responsibilities, available assistance, and consequences for actions.
- Engaging the family in the development of a concurrent permanency plan for the child. This includes, but is not limited to allowing the family input regarding who their child will be residing with, transitional planning and services provided to their children.
- Explaining legal time limits to achieve permanency.
- Providing regular progress updates on the Parent Agency Treatment Plan, acknowledging strengths, and addressing continued safety concerns.

PLAN A AND PLAN B

When a child is placed in an out-of-home placement and has a goal of reunification, two permanency plans for the child must be developed. Plan A is reunification and Plan B is the alternative permanency plan for the child. Plan B must be one of the federally approved permanency goals listed below. The permanency goals must be explored in the order listed below, with adoption being the most preferred goal.

- Adoption.
- Guardianship.
- Permanent Placement With a Fit and Willing Relative.
- Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (APPLA).

The assigned caseworker must develop Plan B with input from the parent, foster parent/caregiver, and child (when appropriate).

Time Frame

A specific concurrent goal must be identified no later than 120 days from initial out-of-home placement. Identification of a concurrent goal at 120 days must be flexible for Indian children to allow tribal involvement and to respect cultural differences; see Concurrent Permanency Planning and Indian Children, in this item.

Plan B Caregiver

The Plan B Caregiver is the person the caseworker identifies, in collaboration with the parents and child, to undertake responsibility for managing the well-being and supervision of the child in the event that the alternative permanency plan must be implemented.

Intensive and exhaustive efforts must continue until a Plan B caregiver is identified. The caseworker must clearly document all efforts to identify a Plan B caregiver in the case service plan.

Optimally, the Plan B caregiver will be the initial placement for the child, and every effort must be made to place a child in a placement that will provide permanency. Children not placed with the Plan B caregiver are encouraged to maintain a relationship through visitation, phone calls, letter writing, etc. The assigned caseworker must assist in facilitating such contact, if necessary.

Implementing Plan B

If progress towards reunification is poor or refused, consideration must be given to recommending a goal change to the identified alternative permanency goal, referred to as Plan B. This discussion must occur during the Case Plan Reassessment Family Team Meeting. The Structured Decision Making (SDM) guidelines for goal change recommendations must be followed when considering a goal change; see FOM 722-09, Foster Care - Updated Service Plan.

If a goal change recommendation is warranted, and the child is not currently placed with the Plan B caregiver, a discussion must take place during the FTM exploring the best interest of moving the child. If it is determined that the child should not move at this time, a time frame must be identified as to when the child will be moved.

Note: Plan B is not fully implemented until the court has ruled that reunification is no longer a viable option. Concurrent permanency planning activities must continue until the court issues a written order that discontinues reunification efforts.

CONCURRENT PERMANENCY PLANNING AND INDIAN CHILDREN

In cases involving a child who is a member of or eligible for membership in a federally recognized tribe, tribal government will be involved in all aspects of case planning, placement, and interventions. In these situations, sequential planning rather than concurrent planning may be the process of choice.

As soon as affiliation in an Indian tribe is identified, the tribe must be included in every aspect of the process. Indian Outreach Services (IOS), tribal representation, and/or urban Indian organizations (where applicable) must be invited to all FTMs where a family has or declares tribal membership or Native American heritage.

All recommendations must be made in consultation with the tribe for families who have or declare tribal membership or Native American heritage. Due to cultural customs, family members may not become involved at the onset of the case in order to not appear as interfering. If the family wants to be considered at a later date, the caseworker must assess the family that comes forward. Caseworkers must understand that culturally, absence of involvement at the beginning of a case is not a lack of interest, but rather respect for the family. Indian culture traditionally values lifelong connections to the tribe over any attachment that may be developed in placement. Placement in an Indian home supersedes any connection or attachment developed in a foster placement (including Concurrent Permanency Planning); see the Native American Affairs (NAA) policy manual for all American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) and Canadian Indian case requirements.