

PERMANENCY PLANNING

Introduction

25-0 Page 1 of 2

Policy

Permanency practice is rooted in the firm conviction that every child deserves a family.

Every child has the right to a permanent and stable home, preferably with their own family. The Department of Children and Families (DCF) believes that children do best when living safely at home with their family of origin.

When living at home with a parent is not safe, the preferred practice is to have children live with kin, or someone that they know who can provide a safe and nurturing home.

If no kin can provide a suitably safe home that meets the child's needs, the child should receive care and services with an appropriate licensed caregiver or a setting that is able to meet their needs, while concurrently working towards a timely permanency outcome.

Dimensions of Permanency

All children shall have permanency which includes an enduring family relationship. Achieving permanency for children in out-of-home care requires the balance of several aspects of permanency for a child, including:

- physical permanency
- relational/emotional permanency
- cultural permanency
- legal permanency

While legal permanency is the primary goal of DCF for children who come into care, it is the balance of all these areas that build lifelong permanency.

Permanency Planning

Permanency planning will begin from the first contact with the family and for children in care. It will continue until that child has exited care and has achieved legal permanency. Permanency planning will respond to the critically important need of children to establish permanent bonds and nurturing family relationships, where the child's safety and health is of paramount concern throughout the process.

When a child cannot return home safely, DCF must actively seek another permanent family setting for the child, either through guardianship or adoption. If the agency is unable to achieve one of the preferred permanency goals for the child, DCF must identify, develop, and support connections to caring adults who agree to provide support to the child during and after the transition into adulthood. If the child is unable to transition to legal permanency, they are to transition from DCF's care with physical, cultural and relational permanency.

Permanency Goals

The permanency goals for children who are separated from their birth parents or legal guardians are as follows:

- reunification
- transfer of guardianship
- permanent transfer of guardianship
- adoption
- other planned permanent living arrangement (OPPLA)

Permanency Goals Continued

Cross-reference: Permanency Planning Practice Guide, 25-OPG

PERMANENCY PLANNING

Introduction

25-0 Page 2 of 2

Legal Permanency

DCF must make concerted efforts to achieve permanency in a timely manner for all children placed in out-of-home care. Based on federal guidelines, the following timeframes have been established:

- reunification: 12 months from removal date from home
- guardianship: 18 months from removal date from home
- adoption: 24 months from removal date from home

Notification to Relatives

Within thirty days of the child's separation from their birth family, DCF is required to make efforts to notify relatives that:

- the child has been or is being removed from the custody of the child's parent or legal guardian
- their rights to participate in the care and placement of the child
- a description of the options available to them to become licensed or approved as a foster home, and the supports and services available to them if the child were to be placed in their home, as well as the opportunity to enter into an agreement with the DCF to receive subsidies for the provision of foster care.

Cross reference: C.G.S. section 17a-101(m), C.G.S. section 46b-129 (10)

Cross reference: DCF Legal Policy 6-6, Superior Court for Juvenile Matters

Racial Justice/ Equity in Child Welfare

As a call to action in being an anti-racist agency, diversity, inclusion and racial equity shall be infused into all areas of our permanency work.
