

What are the Parents' Responsibilities?

- Identify relatives who may be willing to provide a placement and care for the child;
- Participate in visits with the child, unless the court has decided not to allow visits;
- Attend all court hearings;
- Update the court with information;
- Follow all court orders;
- Participate in case planning;
- Keep in contact with the case worker and attorney and provide updated contact information (phone and address);
- Communicate with the case worker and attorney about the child and the case, especially if there are questions or if parents need help with services;
- Participate in court-ordered services, meet the progress goals, and demonstrate the behavioral changes listed in the Family Service Plan;
- Participate in the child's education and health care; and
- Participate in family conferencing and other meetings for the case.



What are the CWS Case Worker's Responsibilities?

Your CWS caseworker will regularly speak with you about your rights, responsibilities, and expectations.

- Conduct ongoing assessments of your child's safety;
- Identify and notify relatives of the child who may want to provide a placement;
- Conduct ongoing assessments of parents' needs;
- Refer parents to appropriate services in a timely manner;
- Consider whether other service providers suggested by parents are appropriate;
- Monitor parents' progress in services;
- Visit with the child, parents, and foster resource placement monthly;
- Keep parents informed about the child's development and progress;
- Determine when the child can remain home with a safety plan;
- If CWS will make changes to the child's placement or visitation plan, inform parents by phone or in writing two weeks in advance or within three working days, when there is an emergency; and
- Inform parents and GAL by phone or in writing immediately when CWS receives a report of harm or threatened harm to the child while in foster care.



Concurrent Permanency Planning

A Guide for Families

Child Welfare Services actively collaborates with family members. It recognizes the family as experts on their respective situation and empowers them in the process.



All children and youth need and deserve a family and a permanent place to call home. Children need stability in their relationships, community, and support system to promote their healthy growth and development. Children should not grow up in foster care. Permanency goals must be established as soon as the child enters foster care.

What is Concurrent Permanency Planning?

Concurrent permanency planning means that two permanency goals are identified at the start of the case and that Child Welfare Services (CWS) will plan to achieve both goals. This means that CWS and parents will work towards returning the child to the family home and case closure (reunification) and will also plan for the possibility that the child may not have a safe family home to return to within a reasonable time and may need an alternative permanent caregiver through adoption, placement in legal guardianship, or with a permanent caregiver until they reach age 18.

What are the Permanency Timelines?

***At least every six months**, there is a review hearing where the judge reviews the case status and determines:

- The family's progress in resolving the safety concerns;
- The child's safety, the continued need for placement out of the home, and the appropriateness of the current placement;
- If the child is receiving appropriate services and care;
- The appropriateness of visitation arrangements;
- If the case plan is being properly implemented, the extent to which each party has complied with the case plan, and that CWS' activities are directed towards achieving a permanent placement for the child; and
- A likely date for the child to return home or to be placed permanently out of the home.

***At least every 12 months**, there is a permanency hearing where the judge ALSO determines:

- If CWS has made a reasonable effort to place siblings together and provide siblings with frequent visitation or other contact if they reside apart;
- If CWS made a reasonable effort to provide services to the family necessary for the child to return home and to achieve reunification;
- If the concurrent plan is appropriate, or if permanency goals should change;
- If the child was consulted in an age-appropriate manner about the permanency goals; and
- If CWS should finalize the alternative permanency goal.

***NOTE:** The timeline can change depending on circumstances.

What are the Permanency Goals?

Reunification. The preferred goal is to reunite the child with parents as soon as possible. The caseworker will work with parents to develop a case plan that builds on family strengths and addresses concerns for the child's safety. Families will be connected to relevant services while maintaining family and cultural connections. Families will also be assured a visitation plan for regular contact with the child.

Adoption: When it is not possible for a child to return home, adoption is another way of providing security, permanency, and love of a family. Parental rights to a child must first be terminated by the court before a child can be adopted. Adoption transfers parental responsibility from the child's birth parents to the adoptive parents. The judge determines whether a caregiver may adopt a child. If the child is 10 years or older, their consent may also be required. The child would then be considered the natural born child of the adoptive parent.

Guardianship: CWS may consider placing the child under a legal guardianship with a caretaker who is willing to provide the child with a permanent home. Certain parental rights would transfer to the guardian, specifically with respect to child protection, education, care and control, custody, and decision making. Guardianship does not require that parents' rights be terminated. If the child is 14 years or older, the child's consent to the guardianship may be required.

Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (APPLA): This goal may be pursued for youth 16 years or older where there is a convincing reason that it is not in the youth's best interest to return home, be placed for adoption, enter into a guardianship, or be placed with a fit and willing relative.