

	INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES CHILD WELFARE POLICY	
	Chapter 5: General Case Management Section 15: Concurrent Planning – An Overview	
	Effective Date: April 1, 2022	Version: 6

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POLICY OVERVIEW

The Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) of 1997 encourages states to engage in Concurrent Planning. It specifies that reasonable efforts to place a child for adoption or with a legal guardian may be made concurrently with reasonable efforts to reunite the family, which is the primary goal of Concurrent Planning. Concurrent Planning may be the most effective way to ensure children in out-of-home and in-home care achieve timely permanency.

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PROCEDURE

In order to achieve permanency in a timely manner, the Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) will evaluate each case to determine the appropriateness of Concurrent Planning and make a recommendation to the court.

DCS **will** develop a Case Plan/Prevention Plan with two (2) permanency plan goals at the onset of the case for a child in out-of-home or in-home care that meets at least one (1) of the following mandatory Concurrent Planning Indicators:

1. Either parent has a history of Termination of Parental Rights (TPR);
2. The parent, guardian, or custodian has been diagnosed with a mental illness or substance use disorder that renders the parent, guardian, or custodian unable to provide for or protect the child and, upon assessment, indicates:
 - a. A history of treatment without response, or
 - b. The parent, guardian, or custodian in treatment has a pattern of noncompliance with medication or treatment intervention.
3. The parent, guardian, or custodian has asked to relinquish the child on more than one (1) occasion following initial intervention; or
4. The parenting youth is under 16 years of age, without a support system, and placement of the child and parent together has previously failed due to the behavior of the minor parent.

DCS **may** develop a Case Plan/Prevention Plan with two (2) permanency plan goals for a child in out-of-home or in-home care that meets at least one (1) of the following potential Concurrent Planning Indicators:

1. There has been a single, severe incident of Child Abuse and/or Neglect (CA/N), such as a near fatality of the child or a sibling or a fatality of a sibling;

2. The family has a history of repeated, failed attempts to correct the conditions which resulted in child maltreatment;
3. The child or siblings have been in out-of-home care on at least one (1) other occasion for a period of six (6) months or more or have had two (2) or more prior placements with DCS involvement;
4. There has been an ongoing pattern of documented domestic violence (DV) lasting at least one (1) year in the household; or
5. The parent, guardian, or custodian has a developmental disability or emotional impairment, which upon assessment by a qualified provider, indicates the parent, guardian, or custodian may be unable to provide for, protect, or nurture the child and does not have relatives or social supports able or willing to assist in parenting.

Note: If any of the above indicators are present, the case should be staffed with the Family Case Manager (FCM) Supervisor to determine the appropriateness of Concurrent Planning.

DCS may consider Concurrent Planning for other children in DCS care when appropriate.

The FCM will:

1. Engage the family during the assessment to determine the impact of the family's strengths and needs on the safety, permanency, and well-being of the child;
2. Utilize the Family Functional Assessment (FFA) Field Guide to assist in identification of the family's functional strengths and underlying needs;
3. Determine whether any of the mandatory or potential Concurrent Planning Indicators are present within five (5) business days of removal or opening a case;
 - a. Continue with regular case procedure if there are no indicators present, or
 - b. Follow the Concurrent Planning procedures outlined below if one (1) or more mandatory indicators are present, or
 - c. Staff the case with the FCM Supervisor if one (1) or more potential indicators are present to determine the appropriateness of Concurrent Planning for the child and family.
4. Conduct a Child and Family Team (CFT) Meeting or Case Plan Conference no later than 30 calendar days following removal or the decision to create two (2) permanency plan goals. Ensure the parent, guardian, or custodian and members of the CFT are informed about Concurrent Planning and collaborate with the parent, guardian, or custodian and the CFT to develop two (2) permanency plan goals when appropriate. See policies 5.07 Child and Family Team Meetings and 5.08 Developing the Case Plan/Prevention Plan for more information.

Note: The CFT will address the "what could go wrong" with the identified permanency plan and will discuss any changes in the permanency plans at each CFT Meeting. See policy 5.07 Child and Family Team Meeting for additional information.

5. Ensure all parties to the case are provided full disclosure about Concurrent Planning and explain the process to all CFT members, and address the following:
 - a. The detrimental effects out-of-home placement may have on a child and the child's need to obtain permanency as quickly as possible,
 - b. Parental rights and responsibilities and outcomes that may occur as a result of parental action or inaction with respect to the Case Plan/Prevention Plan,

- c. Services and supports available to the family, including the role of the CFT. See policies 5.07 Child and Family Team Meetings and 5.10 Family Services for additional information, and

Note: Services available to an incarcerated parent should be considered as part of the Case Plan/Prevention Plan.

- d. Permanency plan options and the time limits to achieve permanency.

Note: A proposed change to the permanency plan goal of reunification should be considered and recommended to the court, if little or no progress is made at six (6) months post-disposition.

6. Identify the following at the CFT Meeting:
 - a. Two (2) Permanency Plan goals for each child's Case Plan/Prevention Plan. See policies 5.07 Child and Family Team Meetings and 6.10 Permanency Plan for additional information:
 - i. One (1) permanency plan goal will be for reunification through services with measurable outcomes and timeframes; and
 - ii. The other permanency plan goal will be adoption, legal guardianship or placement with a fit and willing relative.
 - b. Services necessary to obtain desired outcomes,
 - c. Defined outcome measures, and
 - d. Develop and implement the Visitation Plan for children in out-of-home care in accordance with policies 8.12 Developing the Visitation and 8.13 Implementing the Visitation Plan for more information.

Note: Ensure the child is afforded visitation opportunities with the incarcerated parent (if applicable), unless visitation with the parent is not in the best interest of the child.

7. Utilize the 'Concurrent Planning' dropdown menu in the case management system to code the case as Concurrent Planning;
8. Make referrals for services to work toward the outcomes for both permanency plans within 10 business days of identifying a need for services. See policy 5.10 Family Services for additional clarification;
9. Complete the Case Plan/Prevention Plan (for out-of-home cases) in the case management system, obtain supervisory approval, and secure all signatures within 45 calendar days of removal, or complete the Informal Adjustment/Prevention Plan (for in-home cases) in the case management system as outlined in policy 5.09 Informal Adjustment/Prevention Plan for additional information;
10. Complete a comprehensive search for absent parents and all adult relatives and kin of the child. See policies 5.23 Diligent Search and 5.06 Locating Absent Parents for additional guidance;

Note: Continue diligent efforts to identify and locate all adult relatives and any kin of the child throughout the child's involvement with DCS unless one of the exceptions, as outlined in policy 5.23 Diligent Search, exists.

11. Create a Kinship Connections Diagram to identify extended family members and support the search for potential relative and kinship resources. See the Kinship Connection Diagram for more information;
12. Facilitate a CFT Meeting to discuss the appropriateness of continuing the plan of reunification as the identified permanency plan goal if little or no progress has been made at six (6) months following disposition and make a recommendation to the court; and
13. The case record should be unmarked as a 'Concurrent Planning' case in the case management system and return to regular Case Plan/Prevention Planning procedures if the goal of reunification is unsuccessful and the 2nd identified permanency plan is pursued as the only permanency plan approved by the court.

The FCM Supervisor will:

1. Staff the case with the assigned FCM and make recommendations as needed;

Note: The FCM Supervisor should refer to the RPT if additional discussion is necessary.

2. Approve 'Concurrent Planning' in the case management system;
3. Review and approve the child's placement needs as recommended by the FCM and CFT if necessary;
4. Approve the Case Plan/Prevention Plan or IA/Prevention Plan in the case management system once complete; and
5. Assist the FCM in transitioning back to regular Case Planning procedures and ensure the FCM unmarks the case as a 'Concurrent Planning' case in the case management system if the goal of reunification is unsuccessful and the 2nd identified permanency plan is pursued as the only permanency plan.

The DCS Staff Attorney will:

1. Consult with the FCM and FCM Supervisor; and
2. Review the two (2) permanency plan goals prior to submitting to the court.

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RELEVANT INFORMATION

Definitions

Concurrent Planning

Concurrent Planning requires the identification of two (2) Permanency Plan goals and simultaneous reasonable efforts toward both goals with all participants. The intent of Concurrent Planning is that both plans will be pursued by making reasonable efforts toward both plans simultaneously.

Functional Strengths

Functional strengths are "the buildable" strengths of our families, which help build toward goal achievement.

Permanency Plan

The Permanency Plan is the intended permanent or long-term arrangement for care and custody of the child/youth. See policy 6.10 Permanency Plan for more information.

Underlying Needs

Underlying needs are the root source of an individual and/or family's challenges, which determine the appropriate use of services or interventions.

Forms and Tools

- Case Plan/Prevention Plan/Prevention Plan (SF 2956) – Available in the case management system
- Family Functional Assessment (FFA) Field Guide – Available on the Indiana Practice Model SharePoint
- Informal Adjustment/Prevention Plan – Available in the case management system
- [Kinship Connection Diagram](#)

Related Policies

- [2.06 Sharing Confidential Information](#)
- [5.23 Diligent Search](#)
- [5.06 Locating Absent Parents](#)
- [5.07 Child and Family Team Meetings](#)
- [5.08 Developing the Case Plan/Prevention Plan](#)
- [5.09 Informal Adjustment/Prevention Plan](#)
- [5.10 Family Services](#)
- [6.10 Permanency Plan](#)
- [8.12 Developing the Visitation Plan](#)
- [8.13 Implementing the Visitation Plan](#)

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LEGAL REFERENCES

- [Adoption and Safe Families Act \(ASFA\) of 1997](#)
- [IC 31-9-2-22.1: Concurrent Planning](#)
- [IC 31-34-15-4: Form; consents](#)
- [IC 31-34-21-5.6: Exceptions to requirement to make reasonable efforts to preserve and reunify families](#)

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PRACTICE GUIDANCE- DCS POLICY 5.15

Practice Guidance is designed to assist DCS staff with thoughtful and practical direction on how to effectively integrate tools and social work practice into daily case management in an effort to achieve positive family and child outcomes. Practice Guidance is separate from Policy.

Visitation and Concurrent Planning

Frequent visitation is a foundation of Concurrent Planning. Utilizing frequent visitation between the parent, guardian, or custodian and the child may:

1. Decrease anxiety for the child during out-of-home care;
2. Secure relationships and maintain bonds between the parent and child;
3. Motivate the parent, guardian, or custodian to work toward Case Plan outcomes;
4. Decrease the amount of time children remain in out-of-home care;
5. Offer opportunities for the parent, guardian, or custodian to engage in learning and growing; and
6. Provide an opportunity to evaluate the parent and child relationship.

Changing from the Primary Plan to the 2nd Permanency Plan

The CFT should discuss when it is appropriate for the permanency plan to transition from the plan of reunification to the 2nd identified permanency plan and make recommendations to the court. If the 2nd identified permanency plan is pursued as the only permanency plan, with court approval, the case will return to regular case procedures and will no longer be considered a 'Concurrent Planning' case.

Permanency Plan Options for Concurrent Planning

Permanency plan options for concurrent planning include:

1. Reunification (return to or continuation of existing custodial care within the home of the child's parent, guardian, or custodian or placement of the child with the child's non-custodial parent);
2. Placement of the child for adoption;
3. Appointment of a legal guardian; and
4. Placement of the child with a fit and willing relative who is able and willing to act as the child's permanent custodian and carry out the responsibilities required by the permanency plan;

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