



INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES

CHILD WELFARE POLICY

Chapter 5: General Case Management

Section 15: Concurrent Planning/Second Permanency Plan – Overview

Effective Date: July 1, 2025

Version: 9

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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 timely permanency by making reasonable efforts and pursuing simultaneous permanency plans for the child.

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PROCEDURE

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. See policy 6.10 Permanency Plan for additional information in developing a permanency plan.

DCS **will** develop a Case Plan/Prevention Plan with two (2) permanency plan goals at the onset of the case 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;
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 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.

When the child has been removed from the child's parent, guardian, or custodian for at least 12 months out of the most recent 22 months, the recommended permanency plan **must** include at least one (1) intended permanency plan goal that would not return the child to the care and custody of the parent, guardian, custodian from whose care the child was removed.

If a child has been removed from the parent, guardian, or custodian, reunification services will be provided for:

1. Fifteen months if the child was removed after June 30, 2025 and before July 1, 2026, or
2. Twelve months if the child was removed after June 30, 2026.

Exception: A court may allow more reunification services to a child's parent, guardian, or custodian if they were not given a chance to participate in the process. A court may also extend reunification services for:

- a. 90 days if the parent, guardian, or custodian has followed the child's dispositional decree and the extension is in the child's best interest, and
- b. An additional 90 days the parent, guardian, or custodian continues to follow the child's dispositional decree and the extension is in the child's best interest.

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. 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. 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, or
 - c. Follow the Concurrent Planning procedures outlined below if one (1) or more mandatory indicators are present.
3. Ensure all parties to the case are provided full disclosure about Concurrent Planning, 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 the 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 a parent who is incarcerated should be considered as part of the Case Plan/Prevention Plan.

- d. Permanency plan options, time limit to achieve permanency, and whether 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.

Note: When a child is age 12 or older, has no concrete permanency option, and is six (6) months post disposition a referral will be submitted to the Indiana Adoption Program (IAP) for additional assistance.

4. Conduct a CFT prep meeting to 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
5. Facilitate 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.
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):
 - 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. The Visitation Plan, including implementation of the 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.
7. Utilize the 'Concurrent Planning' dropdown menu in Case Plan/Permanency Plan to code the case as Concurrent Planning in the case management system, upon receiving court approval for 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 information;
9. Complete the Case Plan/Prevention Plan 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 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 5.06 Locating Absent Parents and 5.23 Diligent Search for Relatives/Kin and Case Participants 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 an exception exists, as outlined in policy 5.23 Diligent Search for Relatives/Kin and Case Participants.

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. Unmark 'Concurrent Planning' 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 Regional Permanency Team (RPT) if additional discussion is necessary.
2. Approve 'Concurrent Planning' in the case management system, after court approval;
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 regarding Concurrent Planning;
2. Review the two (2) permanency plan goals prior to submitting to the court; and
3. Request approval of the Permanency Plan or Concurrent Plan by the court.

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RELEVANT INFORMATION

Definitions

Case Juncture

A case juncture is defined as a new awareness of significant information regarding the child or family's strengths or needs, which may impact the Case Plan/Prevention Plan, Safety Plan, and

or the Plan of Safe Care. Case junctures may include, but are not limited to, transition planning and/or positive or negative changes in:

1. Placement;
2. Formal or informal supports;
3. Family Involvement;
4. Visitation;
5. Behavior;
6. Diagnosis (mental or physical);
7. Sobriety;
8. Skills acquisition;
9. Education;
10. Court;
11. Trial Home Visit (THV); and
12. Household Composition.

Concurrent Planning

Concurrent Planning requires the identification of two (2) court approved 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.

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 (SF 2956) – available in the case management system
- Informal Adjustment/Prevention Plan (IA) – available in the case management system
- [Kinship Connection Diagram](#)

Related Policies

- [2.06 Sharing Confidential Information](#)
- [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](#)
- [5.23 Diligent Search for Relatives/Kin and Case Participants](#)
- [6.10 Permanency Plan](#)
- [8.12 Developing the Visitation Plan](#)
- [8.13 Implementing the Visitation Plan](#)

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LEGAL REFERENCES

- [IC 31-9-2-22.1: "Concurrent planning"](#)
- [IC 31-34-15-4: Form; contents](#)
- IC 31-34-20-1.6
- [IC 31-34-21-5: Determination; findings](#)
- [IC 31-34-21-5.6: Exceptions to requirement to make reasonable efforts to preserve and reunify families](#)
- IC 31-34-21-7
- [Adoption and Safe Families Act \(ASFA\) of 1997](#)

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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.

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; or
4. Placement of the child with a fit and willing relative who is able to act as the child's permanent custodian and carry out the responsibilities required by the permanency plan.

Note: Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (APPLA) is NOT an option for concurrent planning.

Supporting Informed Decision Making for Youth aged 12 and Older:

Children aged 12 and older should have an active voice in decision-making throughout the life of the case and at all case junctures including participation in the Forever Home Family Interviews. Transparent conversations with the child may assist the child in making informed decisions, minimize unexpected life changes, and establish a partnership role in the permanency planning process. The IAP may assist the child and their team in the permanency planning process.

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.

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.

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