



NH Department of Health & Human Services
Division for Children, Youth & Families

DCYF Standard Operating Procedure

1625.1 IDENTIFYING APPROPRIATE PERMANENCY GOALS

Policy Directive: **20-36**

Effective Date: **September 2020**

Implements Policy: **1625**

Approved:

Joseph E. Ribsam, Jr., DCYF Director

This SOP defines the procedures for identifying appropriate permanency goals for children in placement.

Procedure

The following information is to support the implementation of the above referenced policy. This document shall not preclude staff from using their professional judgement based on individual circumstances, consistent with the requirements of the policy.

- I. CPSWs and JPPOs will develop the permanency and concurrent permanency goals simultaneously with equal and sustained attention given to both goals until either:
 - A. The permanency goal is achieved; or
 - B. The Court orders efforts to achieve the permanency goal cease and that the concurrent permanency goal be enacted.
- II. Identifying permanency goals focuses on how best to meet the individual needs of the child with a goal that will:
 - A. Establish a legal and/or permanent relationship between the child and a primary caring adult;
 - B. Ensure a relationship that lasts throughout the child's minority and establishes family and other positive adult relationships that may last for the child's lifetime; and
 - C. Provide long-term security and stability.
- III. Identifying appropriate permanency goals should take into account the child's:
 - A. Safety needs;
 - B. Physical and emotional well-being needs;
 - C. Individual permanency needs;
 - D. Maturity and developmental stage;

- E. Connections with their parents/guardians, siblings, and other household/family members; and
 - F. Community and other important connections.
- IV. School-aged children and adolescents should be engaged in permanency planning and consulted as to their wishes around all permanency and concurrent permanency goals throughout the case, based on their developmental ability.
- A. If adoption or guardianship become the primary goal, adolescents should have a role in identifying adoptive parents or guardians.
 - B. If APPLA becomes the primary goal, youth should have a role in identifying an appropriate Primary Caring Adult (PCA).
- V. Unless there are mitigating circumstances, the preferred permanency goal for a child who has been removed from their home is reunification. Mitigating circumstances may include:
- A. The parents are deceased;
 - B. The child has been left at a hospital or safe haven; or
 - C. The parent has been convicted of:
 1. Murder of another child of the parent, a sibling or step-sibling of the child, the child's other parent, or other persons related by consanguinity or affinity, including a minor child who resided with the defendant (pursuant to RSA 630:1-a or RSA 630:1-b);
 2. Manslaughter of another child of the parent (pursuant to RSA 630:2);
 3. Attempt, solicitation, or conspiracy to commit any of the offenses specified above (pursuant to RSA 629:1, RSA 629:2, or RSA 629:3); or
 4. Felony assault under RSA 631:1, RSA 631:2, RSA 632-A:2, or RSA 632-A:3 that resulted in injury to the child, a sibling or step-sibling of the child, the child's other parent, or other persons related by consanguinity or affinity, including a minor child who resided with the defendant.
- VI. When mitigating circumstances warrant a permanency goal other than reunification, other permanency options will be explored in the same manner as they are explored for the concurrent permanency goal as outlined below.
- VII. A concurrent permanency goal of adoption must be considered for all age groups, including adolescents, before less permanent options are considered.

- VIII. A concurrent permanency goal of guardianship with a fit and willing relative or other appropriate party may be appropriate when:
- A. There is a family member or other adult who has a strong life-long connection with the child but is not able to adopt;
 - B. The child (as applicable) does not wish to be adopted; or
 - C. When it is not in the best interest of the child for the parents' rights to be terminated but the child cannot return home due to the parents' inability to meet the child's needs.
- IX. A concurrent permanency goal of APPLA (Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement) may be considered when it has been determined that neither adoption nor guardianship are the most appropriate concurrent permanency goal for the child.
- A. APPLA is not an appropriate goal for children under the age of 16.
 - B. APPLA may be an appropriate goal for children age 16 and over when:
 - 1. The child has a significant bond to their birth family, but is unable to safely reunify with the family;
 - 2. The child has a significant bond to the foster family, another family, or an adult who is not able to adopt or take guardianship;
 - 3. The child is not willing to consider adoption or guardianship at the time and there have been documented ongoing efforts to explore other permanency options with them; or
 - 4. It is appropriate to focus on preparation for the child's independence.
- X. Permanency goals are identified and documented in:
- A. The case plan;
 - B. Court reports and orders; and
 - C. Permanency screens in the DCYF electronic information system.
- XI. Conversations with parents/guardians, children, and others around permanency planning are documented in the DCYF electronic information system as part of the contact log.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q1. Can a non-custodial parent be a child's concurrent permanency goal?

- A** A non-custodial parent is not a concurrent permanency goal as they would be part of the permanency goal of reunification. (Example: a permanency goal of

reunification with parent A or parent B, with a concurrent permanency goal of adoption, guardianship, or APPLA.)

- A If a child was removed from the care of a guardian, their parents would be part of the permanency goal as noted above, and not a concurrent goal.

Q2. What tools can I use to help identify the correct permanency and concurrent permanency goals?

- A The Permanency Planning Team (PPT) is utilized on a regular basis for CPS cases and is also available to JJS upon request.
- A Other tools include: the Permanency Pact, BEST tool, APPLA Agreement, and matching profiles.

Glossary and Document Specific Definitions

A - B C - D E - F G - I J - L M - N O - Q R - S T - V W - Z

Document Change Log

PD	Modification Made	Approved	Date
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