



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

DCYF Standard Operating Procedure

1625.2 CONCERTED EFFORTS TO ACHIEVE PERMANENCY

Policy Directive: **20-36**

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Implements Policy: **1625**

Approved:

Joseph E. Ribsam, Jr., DCYF Director

This SOP defines concerted efforts to achieve permanency for a child.

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. When a child has been removed from their home, the CPSW/JPPD will make concerted efforts to achieve the permanency goal as soon as safely possible. Simultaneously, the concurrent permanency goal must be actively worked on to minimize a delay should the permanency goal not be achieved.
- II. Concerted efforts to achieve reunification include, but are not limited to:
 - A. The early identification of a family's strengths and needs as they pertain to safety within the home;
 - B. Timely and relevant case planning that is frequently reviewed and updated;
 - C. Frequent engagement of parents/guardians where there is meaningful discussion of case plan objectives, review of progress, and identification of resources to help meet family needs;
 - D. Ongoing efforts to identify, locate, and engage missing/non-custodial parents (as appropriate);
 - E. Ensuring opportunities for parents/guardians to demonstrate changed behavior and maintain their connection with their child through frequent and regular parenting time;
 - F. Ensuring youth opportunities to demonstrate changed behavior and their ability to maintain safety to themselves and their community (as applicable);
 - G. Providing a range of services and supports which include, but are not limited to in-home, community-based, or residential treatment program services to address the circumstances under which the Division became involved with the family and led to the child's removal from their home;

- H. Exploration of relatives and natural supports who may be able to assist the family in achieving reunification;
 - 1. This includes assessing whether they have the ability to provide a safe and risk-free environment as a placement option; and
- I. Continual assessment of family progress that includes identification of barriers to reunification and planning to overcome barriers. This includes:
 - 1. Frequent follow-up with service providers to assess family progress and needs;
 - 2. Continual exploration of the appropriateness of services and adjusting services as necessary; and
 - 3. Informal and formal assessment of safety, risk, strengths, and needs.
- III. Concerted efforts to concurrently plan for adoption include:
 - A. Ongoing efforts to identify, locate, and engage family members who may be able to adopt the child if they are unable to return home;
 - B. The early identification of a potential adoptive family;
 - C. Early and ongoing assessment as to the appropriateness of the potential adoptive parent(s) and their ability to provide a safe home for the child and to meet the child's individual needs;
 - D. Frequent engagement with the placement provider/potential adoptive family that includes exploration of the family's strengths and needs as they pertain to adoption;
 - E. Ensuring opportunities for the child to get to know the pre-adoptive family (if they are not placed in their home);
 - F. Ensuring opportunities for the parents/guardians to get to know the pre-adoptive family (unless there are mitigating safety circumstances);
 - G. Inviting identified pre-adoptive parents to treatment and other team meetings as appropriate; and
 - H. Providing a range of services and supports to overcome barriers to adoption (as necessary) and to preserve the adoptive family (post adoption).
- IV. Concerted efforts to concurrently plan for guardianship with a fit and willing relative or other appropriate person include:

- A. Ongoing efforts to identify, locate, and engage family members or others close to the child who may be able to assume guardianship if the child is unable to return home;
- B. The early identification of a potential guardian;
- C. Early and ongoing assessment as to the appropriateness of the potential guardian(s). This should include:
 - 1. Assessing the potential guardian's:
 - (a) Commitment to the child;
 - (b) Ability to meet the needs of the child long-term;
 - (c) Ability to safely maintain family and other connections;
 - (d) Ability to financially support the child; and
 - (e) Ability to follow court protocols;
 - 2. Assessing the home conditions relative to the safety needs of the child;
 - 3. Checking the DCYF electronic information system for previous history with the potential guardian;
 - 4. Completing local police checks;
 - 5. Completing a check of the [Registration of Criminal Offenders](#);
 - 6. Completing criminal background checks; and
 - 7. Frequent engagement with the potential guardian that includes exploration of the individual's strengths and needs as they pertain to guardianship;
- D. Ensuring opportunities for the child to spend time with the potential guardian (if they are not placed in their home);
- E. Inviting potential guardians and other adults involved with the child to treatment and other team meetings as appropriate;
- F. Ensuring opportunities for the parents and the potential guardian to communicate about the needs of the child (unless there are mitigating safety circumstances); and
- G. Providing a range of services and supports to overcome barriers to guardianship as necessary (pre-guardianship) and connection to services to support the family post-guardianship.

- V. Concerted efforts to concurrently plan for APPLA include:
 - A. Ongoing efforts to identify, locate, and engage family members or others close to the child who may be able to assume the role of a Primary Caring Adult (PCA) if the child is unable to return home;
 - B. Early and ongoing assessment as to the appropriateness of the identified PCA and their ability to provide support and guidance to the child based on the child's individual needs. This should include:
 - 1. Assessing the home conditions relative to the safety needs of the child if the child plans to reside with the PCA;
 - 2. Completing local police checks;
 - 3. Completing a check of the Registration of Criminal Offenders;
 - 4. Checking the DCYF electronic information system for previous history with the potential PCA; and
 - 5. Frequent engagement with the identified PCA that includes exploration of the needs of the child and how the PCA can assist the child as they transition into adulthood;
 - C. Ensuring opportunities for the child to spend time with the PCA (if they are not placed in their home);
 - D. Inviting the PCA and other adults involved with the child to treatment and other team meetings as appropriate;
 - E. Ensuring opportunities for the parents and the PCA to communicate about the needs of the child (unless there are mitigating safety circumstances); and
 - F. Providing a range of adult living preparation services and supports to ensure the child is prepared for their transition into adulthood.
- VI. Prioritize the concurrent goal when it is unlikely reunification is going to occur.
- VII. Efforts to achieve permanency are documented in the DCYF electronic information system, the case record, and all court reports/orders. Documentation may include, but is not limited to treatment records, evaluations, and case notes.
 - A. In Child Protective Services' cases, reasonable efforts to finalize the permanency plan are documented in proposed court orders at each court hearing.

- B. In Juvenile Justice Services' cases, there is a Contrary to Welfare and/or Reasonable Efforts Order (NHJB-2438-DF) submitted to the court with each court hearing to identify reasonable efforts to finalize the permanency plan.

VIII. DCYF electronic information system documentation should reflect:

- A. Efforts to engage parents/guardians (including in-person face-to-face/teleconferencing and telephone contact, and written correspondence/email/text) around case planning and meeting the needs of their child;
- B. Efforts to identify and address needs/barriers, including direct support from the CPSW/JPPPO and paid services (for both parents/guardians and potential adoptive parents/guardians as necessary);
- C. Efforts to identify and engage relatives and other connections who may be able to provide support and also potentially provide permanency if reunification cannot occur; and
- D. Efforts to engage placement providers in permanency planning, including identification of barriers to achieving the concurrent permanency goal in a timely manner if reunification cannot occur.

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