Permanency planning is the systematic process of carrying out, within a brief time-limited period, a set of goal directed activities designed to help children live in families that offer continuity of relationships with nurturing parents or caretakers and the opportunity to establish life-time relationships (Maluccio and Fein, 1983). All children and youth need and deserve permanency. Through permanency planning and concurrent planning, children, youth, and families are ensured a permanency transition with appropriate supports to further their success.

**Purpose**

This policy will guide best practice in monitoring permanency goals for every child or youth in placement in the timeliest way possible.

**Definitions**

"Adolescent Worker" is a CPSW who has extensive knowledge about the developmental and related needs of adolescence and who consults with CPSWs/JPPOs to meet the needs of youth and to ensure they make a successful transition out of foster care.

"Adoption" means the establishment of the status of parent and child between individuals who are not biological parent and child. Adoption provides a new parent charged with the care, custody, safety, and well-being of the child when a court decides it is in the child’s best interests to terminate the legal child-parent bond with birth parents or when the parents make a plan to surrender parental rights.

“Age or Developmentally-Appropriate” means the federal standard in SSA 475(11)(A) that qualifies activities or items that are generally accepted as suitable for children of the same chronological age or level of maturity, or that are determined to be developmentally-appropriate for a specific child based on the developmental stages attained by that child with respect to his/her cognitive, emotional, physical, and behavioral capacities.

"APPLA" or "Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement” means a permanency goal in which the Division maintains supervision of, and placement and care responsibility for a youth age 16 or older through the deliberate out-of-home placement of the youth with an identified permanent connection until the youth reaches adulthood based on compelling information that it is not in the youth’s best interest to seek a more permanent goal.

“CPSW” means a Child Protective Service Worker employed by DCYF.
"Concurrent Goal" means the alternate plan for the child/youth in out-of-home placement, which will achieve another permanency goal if reunification with the parent is not possible.

"DCYF" or the "Division" means the DHHS Division for Children, Youth and Families.

"Guardianship" means the appointment pursuant to RSA 463 of an individual or couple to exercise the duty and authority as identified in RSA 169-C:3, XIV Guardian.

"JPPO" or "Juvenile Probation and Parole Officer" means an employee of DCYF who discharges the powers and duties established by RSA 170-G: 16, and supervises paroled delinquents pursuant to RSA 170-H.

"Permanency" means that a child/youth has a legally permanent caregiver to nurture his/her healthy development. As defined in the Child and Family Services Reviews, a child in foster care is determined to have achieved permanency when any of the following occurs: (1) The child is discharged from foster care to reunification with his or her parent or other relative; (2) the child is discharged from foster care to a legally finalized adoption; or (3) the child is discharged from foster care to the care of a legal guardian.

"Permanency Goal" means the desired outcome of interventions and services, which is determined to be consistent with the health, safety, well-being, and best interest of the child/youth. For each child, there will be one primary current goal from the following options:

1. Maintain in own home;
2. Return home (reunification);
3. Adoption;
4. Legal guardianship; or
5. Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (APPLA).

"Permanency Planning Team" or "PPT" means a group of DCYF staff that meets, at least monthly: to develop permanency action plans for children and youth in out-of-home care and to provide consultation and planning to CPSWs/JPPOs concerning permanency issues.

"Permanency Worker" is a CPSW who has expertise in permanency options for children in out-of-home care and who consults with CPSWs/JPPOs to facilitate planning for permanency early in the case.

"Relative" means parent, grandparent, brother, sister, stepparent, stepsiblings, uncle, aunt, nieces, nephews or first and second cousins of the child per RSA 169-C:3 Definitions. XXVI.

"Reunification" means the safe, timely and permanent return of a child to his or her permanent family of origin.
I. The Permanency Planning Team (PPT) will meet at least monthly to conduct a review of selected cases with District Office staff in order to facilitate permanency planning for children/youth in out-of-home care:

A. No later than 6 months from the date of the child/youth’s removal from his/her home;

B. At 11 months from the date of the child/youth’s removal from his/her home or prior to the permanency hearing;

C. Every 6 months thereafter until permanency is achieved; and

D. At 17.5 years old and/or before the youth transitions out of care.

II. If a child/youth has a plan of APPLA and does not have a permanent adult connection identified, PPT meetings will explore ways to achieve timely legal permanence.

A. The PPT will continue to assess whether reunification can occur without danger to the youth. This exploration includes revisiting birth parents whose parental rights have been terminated by the Court.

B. This may also include exploring guardianship with a relative, or an adult adoption.

III. The PPT is minimally composed of the Supervisor(s), Permanency Worker(s), Resource Worker(s), and the assigned CPSW/JPPO.

A. The Permanency Worker should assume the role of facilitating the PPT.

B. If the child/youth is an adolescent, the Adolescent Worker(s) must be included.

C. Other individuals may be invited including but not limited to: a Post-Adoption CPSW, Nurse Coordinator, Fiscal Specialist, Field Administrator, Attorney, FAIR Facilitator, Domestic Violence Program Specialist, Licensed Alcohol and Drug Abuse Counselor, and other program specialists or state office representatives that can inform the goal of permanency for an identified child/youth.

IV. The PPTs will review all cases with the goal of APPLA at least once every six months and again six months prior to the youth turning 18 years of age or leaving the state’s care.

V. The PPT must review cases where there is a shared case management responsibility between a CPSW and a JPPO and the child/youth is in an out-of-home placement.

VI. PPTs are a resource for JPPOs to use when they need assistance with achieving permanency goals for youth involved in Juvenile Justice Services including but not limited to:

A. Youth receiving services under RSA 169-D:2, II(d) with barriers to achieving permanency; and

B. Youth in secure detention facilities are eligible for review by the PPT and permanency is addressed as part of the discharge planning for each youth.

Permanency Planning Team Procedures
I. Procedures outlined below are relevant to all the permanency goals. Additional procedures specific to each permanency goal can be found in the policy, 1625 Permanency Options for Children and Youth.

II. When a child/youth enters an out-of-home placement the Permanency Worker will be notified by the CPSW/JPPO or the Child Protective/Juvenile Justice supervisor.

A. The Permanency Worker may attend case consults to gather information on establishing the initial permanency goals.

B. The initial PPT will be scheduled for no later than 6 months from the date of the child’s removal from his/her home;

III. The CPSW, or JPPO as applicable, will:

A. Request an additional PPT meeting if circumstances are identified to support that a meeting is needed prior to the next scheduled PPT for the particular case;

B. Bring a copy of the youth’s Adult Living Preparation forms for youth age 14 or older, to the PPT;

C. Represent the views of the child/youth and the foster parent(s), or other caretakers, regarding adoption as the recommended permanency goal;

D. Discuss the agreement to be developed with the foster parent(s) and identify any other needs and services the family, adoptive parent(s), guardian(s), or foster parent(s) will require;

E. Monitor the permanency goal to ensure it is the most viable option for the child/youth;

F. Ensure that decisions of the PPT are included in the next case plan update and reflected in the permanency screens in Bridges;

G. Obtain court approval for the permanency goal at the court hearing where permanency is decided and any changes to the ongoing case plan.

IV. The Permanency Worker will:

A. Schedule PPT meetings;

B. Facilitate the PPT meetings;

C. Provide consultation to CPSWs/JPPOs on alternatives to help move permanency goals forward;

D. Provide consultation to the PPT members regarding permanency options and procedures;

E. Provide on-going assistance to CPSWs/JPPOs as it relates to permanency planning for children and youth in care;

F. Continue to monitor the permanency goal to ensure it is the most viable option for the child/youth;
G. Ensure that the PPT Review Report is completed in Bridges including all PPT recommendations; and

H. Work with supervisors to monitor the completion of tasks identified in PPT meetings.

V. The Resource Worker will:

A. Attend the PPT meeting and provide consultation to the team; and

B. Provide on-going assistance to the team and to the CPSW/JPPO as it relates to recruitment of foster and adoptive homes, foster home licensing, and matching of children/youth with the foster families.

VI. For cases involving an adolescent, the Adolescent Worker will:

A. Attend the PPT meetings and provide consultation to the team;

B. Provide up-to-date information to the team which may include:

1. Services available for youth in the foster care system;

2. Required Adult Living and NYTD paperwork;

3. Extended Jurisdiction, and

4. The DCYF After Care Program;

C. Consult with the CPSW/JPPO on circumstances in an APPLA case, including:

1. Age and developmentally appropriate opportunities;

2. Special Education;

3. Training;

4. Vocation; and

5. Transitioning to adulthood.

D. Consult with the CPSW/JPPO to review the services to be delivered through the independent living program; and

E. Provide on-going consultation to the CPSW/JPPO on the availability and utilization of resources for youth, adolescent development, and preparing youth for life after exit from state care.

VII. The Supervisor will:

A. Approve the new permanency goal and concurrent goal for the child/youth; and

B. Recommend interventions or services to assist in achieving permanency.