

County of Fresno Future Steps to Permanency

Veronica Salmeron, MSW

Phase one: Discovery

Goal: *To create more options for support and planning.*

Practice: *Identify at least 40 family members for the child or youth. Include efforts to identify other adults who can be or have in the past been a key supporter of the child or parents.**

Success: *Achieved when the family is extensively known. In many situations, one can expect to learn of a hundred or more relatives and others connected to the child or youth.**

Step one: Youth identified as needing assistance in permanency journey. Referral form to be completed and given to case carrying social worker's supervisor.

Responsible party: Case Carrying Social Worker

Referral form will ask:

- Demographic information
- Degree of Safety concerns
- Degree of Loneliness
- Degree of Urgency
- Mental Health Clinician?
- SW to identify two to three people to be a part of Youth's support team.

Step two: SW Supervisor will approve the referral and submit to the Permanency Specialist.

Responsible party: Social Work Supervisor

Step three: Case carrying social worker will speak to the youth about the pending permanency journey and

engage the youth in conversation about what permanency means to them and important people throughout their lives.

Responsible party: Case Carrying Social Worker

Step four: Case carrying social worker to speak to youth's careprovider about the youth's pending permanency journey in efforts to ensure their participation.

Responsible party: Case Carrying Social Worker

Step five: Case carrying social worker to speak to youth's mental health clinician about the youth's pending permanency journey in efforts to create further supportive resources.

Responsible party: Case Carrying Social Worker

Step six: Case carrying social worker to speak to youth's legal representative about the youth's pending permanency journey in efforts to ensure their active participation.

Responsible party: Case Carrying Social Worker

Step seven: Referral made to Permanency Therapist.

Responsible Party: Permanency Specialist

Step eight: Referral given to search team.

Responsible Party: Permanency Specialist

Step nine: Permanency Specialist to call those identified by SW to explain process and to set up meeting time for

the Youth's support team (SW, those identified by SW, Permanency Specialist, Permanency Therapist, SW Supervisor).

Responsible Party: Permanency Specialist

Step ten: Search team (clerical) has 30 days to find possible relatives by:

- pulling all case folders and extracting possible contacts
- Reviewing CWS/CMS and File net information for possible contacts
- speaking to worker about who the youth has contact with , or had contact with
- Utilizing US Search for more information
- Develop a genogram of known family members
- Update family contact information on CWS/CMS
- Document all efforts in designated areas
- Summarize all information in narrative form

Responsible party: Search team (Clerical)

Phase two- Engagement:

Goal: *To engage those who know the child best and have a historic and/or inherent connection in helping the child by sharing information and helping **

Practice: *Through the use of a unique and individualized engagement strategy, enlist the support of as many family members and others important to the child or family to participate in providing important information helpful to the child. Begin preparing family members and others to assist the social worker with decision making and participate in supporting the young person through committed relationship.**

Success: *Identification of key family members or other potential life-long connections to assist in providing informant that may assist the Youth in finding their identity.*

Step one:

Engagement staff person begins making contact and engaging with relatives found by the search team. Engagement staff gathers family information and identifies possible connections for youth.

Methodology may include:

- internet searches
- cold calls
- face to face contacts
- Mailing out letters to possible contacts
- Developing a genogram of family members
- Updating family contact information on CWS/CMS
- Documenting all efforts in designated areas
- Summarizing all information in narrative form for monthly progress reports

Responsibility: Engagement staff (Social Worker, MSW)

Step two:

Meeting with Youth's Permanency Journey Support Team in efforts to decide on initial first steps to take with newfound information and possible connections, as well as to identify additional supports for youth.

The team may consists of:
 Case carrying social worker
 Supervisor of Case carrying social worker
 Permanency Specialist
 Permanency Therapist
 Engagement Staff Person

Professionals identifies by case carrying
Social Worker

Youth's careprovider/ resource family

**Responsible party: Permanency
Specialist**

Phase Three- Planning:

Goal:

Hold meetings with the participation of parents, family members, and others important to the child focused on planning for the successful future of the child or young person.

Practice:

*Bring the identified family members and others who care about the child together to learn more about the young person's essential, lifelong need for support and affection. Participants must have a choice in the process. The social worker and the court will make final decisions that include consideration of the team's perspective about the future if the child or young person. Equal value will be placed on the need for a family to live with and an enduring network of support. Challenges will be identified and solutions created. Planning will be done on a "Plan's fail, our children do not" basis.**

Success:

The occurrence of a life-long connection conference, or similar family meeting that includes family members, and other important people identified by the youth.

Step one:

Contact between family and youth including but not limited to: letters, phone calls, e-mails, and visits.

Responsible party: Assigned case carrying social worker and Youth's

Permanency Journey Support Team.

Step two:

Submit referral for life-long connection conference.

Responsible party: Assigned case carrying social worker

Step three:

Contact members to attend life-long connections conference.

Responsible party: Family Group Conference Coordinator and Permanency Specialist

Step Four: Decision Making

Goal:

*The youth's Permanency Journey Support team with the case carrying social worker will make timely decisions that provide the young persons with appropriate levels of affection and belonging that are expected to be enduring.**

Practice:

*The team involved in planning will work with a sense of urgency, fully and candidly informed about the needs of the child or [youth] and the expected consequences of not having a safe forever family. The team will be prepared to make key informed decisions about the future of the [child or youth], including their safety, physical and emotional well-being and belonging in a [life-long] family. The team will meet with the understanding that long-term placement(s) without legal permanency are not considered a successful decision.**

Success:

The participation of family members or other important people in the life of the Youth in making key decisions

pertaining to the Youth's permanency journey. This may or may not include placement of the Youth with family members, but must include a permanent life-long family with a legal permanent connection.

Step one:

Success can be seen in the following:

- increase in visit frequency
- legally binding relationships
- changes from temporary placements to permanent life-long placements
- court decisions

Responsible party: Assigned case carrying social worker and Youth's Permanency Journey Support Team.

Step Five: Evaluation

Goal:

*An inclusive, individualized and unconditional plan to achieve legal and emotional permanency has been created with a time line for completion.**

Practice:

*The team has successfully "foreseen" the likelihood that their plans for the child and young person are safe, stable and lasting. Adults who are caring for the child have adequate and lasting support and key relationships.**

-Have we identified and engage an adequate level of enduring support for the child and their caregivers?

-Has the team created a plan that includes family members and other adults willing to offer their support if the Plan "A" option is unsuccessful?

-Are there at least three permanency options for this youth?

-Is foster care still one of these options?

-Is there enough support for all parties involved?

*There is a plan and commitment to have the team reconvene if challenges arise that threaten the child's safety and stability. A member of the team is elected to organize/facilitate future meetings.**

Success:

*All plans for permanency have been achieved within the timeframe allotted. More than one option for permanency is present and remaining in foster care is **not** one of them. Family members and other important people have been involved in determining the set goals for this youth's permanency journey and all members of the youth's support system are receiving adequate support to continue involvement in the child/youth's journey.*

Responsible party: Assigned case carrying social worker and Social Work Supervisor

Step one: A permanency case review that asks all of the above questions and CPYP evaluation questions, is to be completed no less than every six months.

Responsible party: Assigned case carrying social worker and Social Work Supervisor

Step Six- Follow On Supports

Goal:

*The team will have supported the child or young person and their family [or other important people] to plan for and access essential formal and informal support.**

Practice:

*The team will actively support children, [youth] and caregivers to successfully access services, supports and key relationships. Teams will emphasize natural and community supports that are the most normative and enduring. Services that require payment will be seen as temporary and not as a basis for life-long relationships.**

Success:

The child and caregivers have been linked to support systems that are long lasting, as well as the most natural and cost free possible to ensure the continued success of the child/youth's life-long relationship goal.

Responsible party: Assigned case carrying social worker and Social Work Supervisor

*Kevin Campbell, *Six Steps for Family Finding*