



Community Based Care: Hardee, Highlands & Polk Counties

POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Series:	Operations: Case Management
Policy Number:	5-400
Policy Name:	Case Planning and Permanency
References:	Senate Bill 664 (2024)
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Revised Date:	N/A
Compliance Committee:	May 31, 2024

Policy:

Heartland for Children (HFC) and its subcontractors must maximize the use of concurrent case planning, minimize the time to complete preliminary and final adoptive home studies, streamline data entry into the statewide child welfare information system, and reduce time to permanency.

Procedures:**1. Concurrent Planning/Permanency**

“Concurrent planning” means establishing a permanency goal in a case plan that uses reasonable efforts to reunify the child with the parent, while at the same time establishing another goal that must be one of the following options:

- a) Adoption when a petition for termination of parental rights has been filed or will be filed
- b) Permanent guardianship of a dependent child under s. 39.6221
- c) Permanent placement with a fit and willing relative under s. 39.6231
- d) Placement in another planned permanent living arrangement under s. 39.6241

Factors for establishing a concurrent goal include the history of child welfare involvement, severity of any mental health diagnosis, severity of substance abuse/misuse, pattern of violence, significant criminal and/or incarceration history, severity of abuse or neglect on the child, level of parental engagement with the child and quality of parent’s support system.

When establishing a concurrent goal, all permanency options, including expectations, available supports and required timelines must be shared. When a goal other than reunification is considered, the parents must be provided information about alternative permanency options.

Every case involving a child in an out-of-home placement shall be evaluated to determine if concurrent case planning is appropriate. Prior to approving case plan modifications, supervisors should determine

whether there is a genuine concurrent plan that is being actively pursued and sustained in the event behavior change is not likely in a timely way. The appropriateness of concurrent goals shall be evaluated at each permanency staffing.

When recommending a concurrent goal at a permanency hearing, the new case plan reflecting the concurrent tasks should be filed before the permanency hearing. If the case plan is not filed before the hearing and the concurrent goal is approved by the court, the new case plan must be filed no later than 10 calendar days after the hearing.

2. Case Records

Birth Verification of Children

- a) A copy of a birth certificate or birth verification shall be obtained for each child under court ordered in-home supervision within 15 days after the case transfer conference
- b) A copy of a birth certificate or birth verification shall be obtained for each child entering out-of-home care within 15 days of initial placement
- c) For children born out-of-state or out-of-country, verification of the child's birth shall be requested within 15 days from initial placement and documented in the case file. Refer to subsection 65C-30.007(12), F.A.C., regarding the necessary actions when it is determined that a child was born in another country and has not established legal alien status

Within 30 days of the TPR petition being filed, the child welfare professional will ensure that all health history records, school records, mental health records, hospitalization records and residential setting records are requested and obtained within 90 days. Additionally, within 30 days of the TPR petition being filed, the child welfare professional will ensure that the child's birth records are requested and obtained within 90 days.

Within 30 days of the TPR petition being filed, the child welfare professional will ensure that the following documents are in the child welfare information system:

- a) Shelter Petition and Shelter Order
- b) Dependency Petition and Dependency Order
- c) Modification Petition and Modification Order if applicable
- d) Original Predisposition Report (Ongoing Family Functioning Assessment)
- e) Case plans that address the child's needs
- f) Protective investigations identifying the child as a victim
- g) Guardian ad Litem report filed with the court concerning the child
- h) Psychological evaluations and comprehensive assessments
- i) Names of providers who provided services to child while in foster care

The adoption packet given to prospective adoptive parents to initiate the adoption process shall only include the "Adoptive Home Application" form, CF-FSP 5071, July 2021, which is available online at <http://www.flrules.org/Gateway/reference.asp?No=Ref-13385>.

- a) All decisions made regarding case closure or redirection, along with the rationale for the decisions reached, will be clearly documented in the case record
- b) All decisions made regarding services and compliance will be clearly documented in the case record
- c) Other contacts with clients, including telephone conversations and in person and virtual visits will be clearly documented in the case record
- d) Documentation should be accomplished within 48 hours of the activity
- e) Documentation should include

- i. Who was present
 - ii. Where the meeting/contact occurred
 - iii. Type of contact
 - iv. What was discussed
 - v. Date of meeting/contact (day, month and year)
- f) Documentation will be placed in the electronic case file and/or in the child welfare information system. Case record is defined as a combination of Florida System of Record and the electronic file record in perceptible content.
- g) Pertaining to Supervisory Review, the following must be documented quarterly in each child's chronological notes utilizing the Review, Supervisor note type:
- i. Date of supervision and individuals present
 - ii. Topics discussed including progress and barriers to permanency as it relates to the family plan
 - iii. Tasks and who is responsible
 - iv. Follow-up on tasks from previous supervision
 - v. The case manager supervisor must note in the child welfare information system that a "supervisory review" has occurred
 - vi. Discussion of monitoring of oversight of safety plan management
 - vii. Discussion surrounding what should be changed in order to meet conditions for return
 - viii. Child needs
 - ix. Evaluation and scaling of protective capacities

The case manager supervisor shall review child welfare professional case notes to ensure timeliness of case note documentation. The case manager supervisor will provide consultation prior to approving the following: safety plans, (within 5 business days of case transfer), critical junctures, progress updates, case plans and modification of case plans, judicial reviews, case closure and case preparation activities. The supervisor will use the case notes page in the child welfare information system utilizing the supervisor consultation note type.

All case activities, including contacts and attempted contacts with a child, the child's parent or caregiver and collaterals must be entered in the child welfare information system no later than 48 hours after the actual contact or other event. The supervisor shall ensure that documentation of a completed home study is within the statewide child welfare information system pursuant to 39.521, F.S., CFOP 170-1 Chapter 5 and 65C-28.012(2).

The CBC shall ensure permanency staffings are held prior to preparing for a permanency hearing. The child welfare professional shall assess for conditions for return at every staffing and hearing and on an on-going basis throughout the life of the case.

A Progress Update shall be used to assess the parent(s) protective capacities, home environment and backgrounds for Reunification. Within 10 business days of starting a progress update to reunify, the child welfare professional must update local criminal history checks, including required fingerprint submission for any household members 18 years of age or older.

The child welfare professional shall have on going communication with the caregivers regarding services and benefits available to children and families with the goal of permanent guardianship.

Approved by:



Kim Daugherty, Chief Executive Officer

5/31/27
Date