

Achieving Permanency

Timely Permanency and Healthy Child Development

- ▶ Plan for permanency from day one.
- ▶ Consider the rapid and multifaceted development of a very young child when determining permanency goals.

Preliminary Protective Hearings

- ▶ Determine the relative harm of nonremoval versus the potential psychological harm of removal.
- ▶ Determine if the child-placing agency has made reasonable efforts to prevent removal.
- ▶ If the child will be removed, identify appropriate caregivers.
- ▶ Seek the least disruptive, most family-like setting.
- ▶ Evaluate child care/early education options for the child.
- ▶ Devise a plan for parent-child and sibling contact.
- ▶ Request the child's medical records and order screening to identify the child's health needs.
- ▶ Identify services for the parent.

Disposition and Case Planning

- ▶ If a placement change is needed, identify the safest, most family-like placement.
- ▶ Revisit reunification.
- ▶ Identify the child's needs and available family resources.
- ▶ Assess caregiver supports.
- ▶ Require comprehensive individualized case planning in each case.
- ▶ Encourage family group conferencing.
- ▶ Ensure concurrent planning begins early in the case.
- ▶ Identify the family's service needs.
- ▶ Ensure a comprehensive visitation plan is developed.

Review Hearings

- ▶ Assess whether the issues that caused the child's removal are being addressed.
- ▶ Order additional services or reassessments for the child.
- ▶ Evaluate safety and risk factors if the child will return home.

- ▶ Determine if the substitute caregiver supports the parent toward reunification.
- ▶ Assess the visitation plan and whether changes are needed.

Permanency Hearings

- ▶ Determine if reunification is a viable permanency plan.
- ▶ Identify how reunification will affect the child in the short term.
- ▶ Ensure transition planning is part of a reunification plan.
- ▶ Determine if adoption is a viable permanency plan.
- ▶ Determine if the current caregiver can adopt the child.
- ▶ Consider ordering mediation to resolve adoption-related concerns.
- ▶ Determine if legal guardianship is a viable permanency plan.
- ▶ Determine if relative placement is a viable permanency plan, only after exploring more desirable options.
- ▶ In most cases, APPLA should not be a permanency goal for very young children.
- ▶ Hear the child's views regarding the permanency plan.
- ▶ Observe preverbal children in court to inform your decision making.
- ▶ Consider the child's developmental stage during courtroom observations.
- ▶ Determine if there is cause to extend the goal of reunification.

Postpermanency Support for Young Children and Their Families

- ▶ Ensure supports are in place to sustain reunification.
- ▶ Identify adoption disruption factors.
- ▶ Identify postadoption supports.
- ▶ Ensure postadoption supports and services are equally available to permanent guardians or long-term relative caregivers.
- ▶ Maintain family connections.

