

Policy Name:	Permanency Support
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Subject:	Post-Permanency Support; Aftercare; Post-Reunification Support; Family Support; Family Teaming; Safety Analysis and Plan;
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Any information referenced within this document is considered to be a part of this policy with the exception of the "related resources" section.

Summary:

This policy details the objectives and procedures for permanency support.

Related Resources:

[Ongoing Services Standards](#); [Protocol for Family Team Meetings](#); [Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths Assessment](#); [Safety Analysis and Plan](#); [Case Evaluation](#); [Reunifying the Child and Family](#); [Frequency and Documentation of Contact with Children, Families and Caregivers](#); DCF Memo Series 2008-3 [Trial Reunification for Children in Out-of-Home Care](#)

Policy:

Permanency support is a collaborative effort between an Ongoing or Family Case Manager and a family with prior Child Protective Services (CPS) involvement, and is intended to enhance parental capacities and long-term child safety after the child(ren) and parent(s) have been reunified. Whether an open CHIPS order is still in place (involuntary participation), or whether court orders have expired or have been terminated (voluntary participation), the Case Manager will approach the post-reunification relationship in the spirit of offering support, guidance and assistance.

The intent of permanency support is to identify parenting challenges or the return of old behaviors, and to provide early intervention and support so that families can learn to resolve issues before they escalate or before behaviors become out of control. Supports also include identifying connections within the family network or community that can be created or reinforced to provide the parent(s) additional resources once agency involvement ends. These efforts will help to ensure that reunified children remain safe in the home and will further decrease the family's likelihood of system re-entry and/or CPS involvement.

Procedures:

Initiation and Term of Permanency Support

Case Managers will provide supports and services to reunified families for a period of 12 months post-reunification. In families with more than one child in out-of-home care, the 12-month permanency support period will run from the date of the last child's reunification. When children are reunified to two separate households, the reunification period must be tied to the children going to each household. For example, child A is reunified with mom on Jan. 1; permanency support begins for child A on that date. Child B is reunified with dad on Feb. 15; permanency support for child B begins on that date.

Permanency support may be voluntary or involuntary:

- 1) While a CHIPS order remains in effect, permanency support is involuntary.
- 2) When the CHIPS order expires or is dismissed by the court, family participation in permanency support is voluntary.

Whether permanency support is voluntary or involuntary, the approach taken by the Case Manager shall be the same; i.e., s/he will understand that their role is one of providing support and services even while continuing to assess the safety of all children in the home.

Agencies will develop an internal permanency support agreement to utilize with families.

Documentation: At reunification, the case designation in eWiSACWIS shall be changed to "Permanency Support." When there are multiple children in out-of-home care, the case type will be changed to Permanency Support when the last child in out-of-home care has achieved reunification. Documentation of legal actions or changes to legal status must be documented within three business days of occurrence.

Frequency and Documentation of Contacts

When a court order is in place, the Ongoing Services Standards dictate the frequency of face-to-face contacts. However, regardless of the legal status of the child, all families shall be seen according to their individual needs and circumstances even if this requires face-to-face contacts over and above those set by the Standards.

Depending on the family, some may need contact with the Case Manager once or twice weekly directly following reunification; with others, it may be less. Contacts may need to increase during times of crisis so that the Case Manager can assist the family to manage frustrations through coping mechanisms, problem-solving and identification of additional external supports. In determining the appropriate level of support needed by any family, the Case Manager shall always consider the family history, strengths and needs, present circumstances.

A family participating voluntarily may refuse further permanency support and social worker contact at any time. However, it is expected that the Case Manager will make reasonable and continued efforts over the entire post-reunification period to engage and retain these families in the process, and all efforts made must be documented.

Documentation: All face-to-face contacts, home visits, telephone calls, mail and/or email shall be documented monthly in eWiSACWIS as a case note within three business days of occurrence.

Family Teaming, Safety Analysis and Plan, Staffings and CANS Requirements

Family Team meetings: These shall occur 1) 30 days prior to reunification; 2) within 30 days prior to case closure; and 3) at any point in time the family requests a meeting throughout the permanency support period. All meetings will be documented in an eWiSACWIS case note.

Safety Assessment vs. Safety Analysis and Plan: A revised Safety Analysis and Plan shall be completed 30 days prior to reunification and will be entered into eWiSACWIS as the type "Prior to Reunification." Post-reunification, a Safety Assessment must be conducted at any time there is a change in circumstances within the home that could affect child safety.

Staffings: Staffings shall occur minimally at six months post-reunification and again at the time of case closure. Both staffings should include the Case Manager, Supervisor and the Program Manager. The six-month staffing shall address family participation, connection to external supports and the frequency of face-to-face contacts. The Case Closure staffing shall review discharge planning prepared by the Case Manager detailing family connections to both formal and informal supports.

CANS: The CANS will be completed prior to the six-month staffing and again prior to the discharge staffing. If the case assignment type is Child Welfare, the CANS will be completed on each child in the home who has been reunified. CANS information will be utilized to inform planning decisions.

Family-Centered Supports and Services

The Case Manager will provide an individualized and customized set of supports and services for each family holistically as well as for any individual household family member as needed. These could include mental health services, stress or anger management, housing or housing counseling, job search assistance or career planning, financial management, specialized health care, nursing services, informal respite care, etc. When at all possible, the family will be linked to services and supports widely available in their communities as well as informal supports within their universe of family and friends.

New Indications of Child Abuse or Neglect

In all cases where there is a *new* allegation of abuse or neglect, whether there is a court order or not, the Case Manager will call in a report to 220-SAFE. BMCW's Access and Initial Assessment units will then proceed as with any new referral.

It is the responsibility of the Case Manager to ensure for the immediate safety of the child(ren) through a protective plan, in-home safety plan or taking temporary physical custody.

Case Closure

Other than upon completion of the 12-month period of permanency support, a case may be closed under other circumstances including, but not limited to:

- If the case head is deceased, but only after ensuring the care and/or guardianship of the child(ren).
- If the family cannot be located for a minimum period of 60 days. Case Managers must attempt to locate the family pursuant to BMCW's policy: [Process for Locating Families](#).

If the family relocates out of state or to another county within the state, proof of the family's relocation (e.g. postal change of address form, copy of a new lease or utility bill) must be scanned into eWiSACWIS. When the Case Manager has been unable to obtain such proof, as in cases where a family relocates without prior notice, the documentation of the Case Manager's diligent efforts to obtain the proof will suffice.

A supervisory consultation must occur prior to closing any case.

Responsibilities: Ongoing/Family Case Managers, Supervisors, Program Managers