

One Voice Texas

A Collaborative for Health & Human Services



Children & Youth Services: Permanency Meetings & Notification

Position Statement Approved by One Voice Texas: August 10, 2012

Issue/Concern:

Permanency planning meetings are opportunities for various stakeholders in a child's case to come together in order to ensure appropriate goals and objectives are set and acted upon to achieve permanency for a child in foster care. Frequent meetings are essential to ensure that complex cases can be appropriately addressed in the very limited legal time frames. However, currently the Family Code only requires when a child is in the Temporary Managing Conservatorship of the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) that permanency planning meetings occur when the child has been in custody for 45 days and again at 5 months. There is no requirement for a planning meeting prior to the 1 year mark at which a trial occurs and a final order can be designated. At this stage, parental rights may be terminated and permanent managing conservatorship can be given to a relative or the state. By establishing timely permanency planning meetings and ensuring that all appropriate parties are notified in a timely manner, the opportunity for reunification or another permanent placement for children in foster care can be increased.

Specific Policy Recommendation(s):

- When DFPS has Temporary Managing Conservatorship, require an additional permanency planning meeting around the time the child has been in care for 9 months.
- Require specific notification to child placing agencies of permanency planning meetings.
- Require electronic notification to professional stakeholders for permanency planning meetings and court hearings to reduce cost and increase timely notification.

How Will This Impact State Funding? What Can Be Accomplished?

More efficient and effective permanency planning can occur by ensuring that all appropriate stakeholders receive timely electronic notification, versus using traditional postal services. This change, as well as the addition of a 9 month permanency meeting, can help decrease the amount of time a child spends in foster care and provide further cost savings to the state.

Others That Support These Recommendations:

Texas Network of Youth Services (TNOYS); Texas CASA, Texans Care for Children

Supporting Facts/Research Resources:

1. Casey Family Programs. 2010. *Permanency Roundtable Project: Participant Evaluation Report*. Available at: http://www.casey.org/Resources/Publications/pdf/garoundtable_participants.pdf. Earlier and more frequent meetings.
2. Annie E. Casey Foundation. 2003. *Team Decision-Making Protocol/Policy Outline*. Available at: <http://www.childwelfare.gov/systemwide/assessment/approaches/family.cfm>.

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