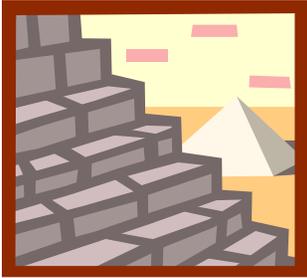


5 Steps for Creating An Individual Permanency Plan



- Preparation
- The Meeting
- Writing the Plan
- Investigating Resources
- Follow up

PREPARATION

- **Visioning – develop and prioritize a set of goals with the child**
 - What will family life look like for this child?
 - What about the future – 5, 10, 15 years from now?
- **Identify the child’s talents, strengths, needs**
 - Use social work tools such as Lifebook, Eco-map
- **Identify the youth’s network**
 - Who should be included in the meeting and in creating and implementing the permanency plan?
 - Who *really knows* this young person?
 - Who are the important people from the child’s *past*?
 - Where does the child *spend time*?
 - Where can you find people who *do not fear* the child’s special needs or challenging behaviors?
 - Where is the community of people who *share the child’s interests, hobbies or talents*?
- **Collect Input from people who cannot attend**
 - Try to schedule the meeting at a time and place to encourage maximum participation
 - If someone still cannot attend, talk to them ahead of time to gather their input
- **Help participants think through goals in advance**
 - You are not asking participants to make a lifetime commitment
 - You are asking them to attend one meeting to help think about the future of this particular child
 - Make it clear why each person is being invited – “We think you will be a valuable resource at this meeting because you have known this child for 5 years” or “you understand many of the challenges we face” or “you have seen this child in settings the rest of us never see”, etc.
- **Anticipate special challenges that might arise – discuss with your supervisor**

THE MEETING

- Gather people together, make introductions, set a comfortable atmosphere
- Develop and refer to ground rules as needed
- Be clear about roles and responsibilities
- Don't be afraid of uncomfortable topics or emotional outbursts, but work to transition to constructive communication
- Don't expect all needs or questions to be addressed in one meeting, but be clear that you will follow up

WRITING THE PLAN

- **Start Broad - brainstorm, before you *get specific***
 - No idea is too wacky
 - **Ask the “Five questions” – repeatedly!**
 - Get everyone in the room involved
- **Empower the youth to take the lead**
 - If the young person is fading out, draw him back in with questions, choices, task assignments
- **Address a range of issues concurrently**
- **Ensure that plan is individually tailored to *this child***
- **Build in flexibility**
- **Be specific and concrete –**
 - Break each idea down into the smallest component
 - Assign someone on the team to follow up on each item
 - **WHO will do WHAT by WHEN**
 - **Plan the next meeting**
- **Make a copy of the plan for all participants before the end of the meeting**

INVESTIGATE RESOURCES

- **Identify both formal and informal resources**
 - Use resources child is familiar with as starting point
 - These resources form the basis for the “aftercare” or “post permanency” plan
- **Formal resources – agencies, institutions, public and private providers**
 - Be aware of Applications, enrollment, waiting period
 - Eligibility, fees, alternatives
- **Informal resources**
 - Is the current foster family a resource
 - Resources provided by extended family
 - Peers, social network of the youth
 - Community of faith

FOLLOW UP

- Identify one person to “manage the plan” and make periodic phone calls or emails to other members of the team – in some cases this could be the youth himself!