

Practice Guide for Caseworkers

Placement Planning

MITEAM COMPETENCY

The placement planning process is a methodology to ensure that children are placed in the most appropriate, least restrictive living arrangement consistent with their needs. This placement would ideally enable the child to maintain connections to family and friends and receive assistance with any special needs and stay in the same school. This process is critical to ensuring that family connections are maintained through appropriate visits when the child, his or her siblings and/or parents are temporarily living away from one another, unless compelling reasons exist for keeping them apart.

FIDELITY MEASURES

Observation:

- Prepares family team members (informal or formal) for participation on the team.
- Facilitates Teaming.
- Asks the individual(s) how s/he can be of assistance to the family.
- Inquires about individual(s)'s perspective on the child(ren)/youth's safety (both physical and psychological).
- Inquires about individual(s)'s perspective on the child(ren)/youth's well-being (both physical and psychological).
- Asks individual(s) about their perspective on the parent's ability to keep the child(ren)/youth safe.
- If child(ren)/youth is not residing with custodial parent: Asks individual(s) their perspective on the caregiver's ability to keep the child(ren)/youth safe.
- If child(ren)/youth is not residing with custodial parent: Inquires about the caregiver's perspective on the impact of traumatic events on the child.
- Requests individual(s) input regarding living arrangement options for the child(ren)/youth.
- Inquires about individual(s)'s perspective regarding how the living arrangement options impact child(ren)/youth connections.
- Inquires about the individual(s)'s perspective on the safety of all family/household members (both physical and psychological).

Documentation:

- A team that provides support to the child(ren)/youth and family has been formed.
- The worker prepares the family team members (informal or formal) for participation on the team.
- Documentation indicates the worker maintained contact with the family and support person(s) between in-person meetings.
- The parent's ability to keep the child(ren)/youth safe was documented.
- The impact of trauma and resiliency on parent's ability to keep child(ren)/youth safe was documented.
- There is evidence in the documentation that the child's living arrangement has been fully assessed and determined safe.
- There is evidence in the documentation that the child(ren)/youth current living arrangement supports the permanency plan.
- There is evidence in the documentation that the worker noted 2 or more of the following: the condition of the home, attitude of the family members, behaviors of family members, or relationship patterns between family members.

Interview:

- The individual(s) was able to identify helpful activities of the worker.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The individual(s) described specific examples where his/her input was utilized in decision making. The individual(s) reports the worker addressed the potential impact of trauma to the child. <p><u>In Supervision:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The worker was able to identify: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is most important to the individual/family. How trauma is addressed in the case plan. How the parent participates in the process of change. If the current living arrangement meets the well-being needs of the child(ren)/youth. How the current living arrangement is helping build resiliency. How the child's current living arrangement ensures the child's physical and psychological safety. How he/she educates the family about the importance of teaming. How committed the family's team is to support the family's plan. 	
<p>POLICY REQUIREMENTS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain children in their own homes whenever safely possible. Give preference to placement with a relative - if all requirements are fulfilled - when children must be removed from their home. Place children in the most family-like setting and keep siblings together whenever possible. Preserve and encourage permanent connections with siblings and caring and supportive adults. Choose a placement that helps facilitate and support return home if the plan is reunification. Consider a placement with a view toward preparing the child for permanency. 	
<p>HOW TO USE YOUR SUPERVISOR</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore, with supervisor, community resources and services to assist in placement stability. Discuss with supervisor ways to facilitate engagement with family members. Seek review by supervisor of assessment and decisions around placement. Explore, with supervisor, ways to ensure that parents spend natural, quality time with their child. 	
<p>KEY CASEWORKER ACTIVITIES</p>	<p>WHERE IN THE LIFE OF THE CASE</p>	<p>PRACTICE GUIDANCE TECHNIQUES</p>
<p>KCA 21 PLACEMENT PLANNING</p> <p><i>Assess whether potential relative or kin caregivers are willing and able to</i></p>	<p>Throughout the life of the case.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Observe family relationships and how the family and child relate to each other. Gather information from a potential relative caregiver to determine if a placement with that relative would be in a child's best interest, if this would be temporary or permanent.¹ Remove barriers to relative placement and licensing, specifically related to unemployment, poverty, criminal histories of other adults in the home and needed home repairs, if it is determined that the child's physical, psychological and well-being needs would best be met in the relative placement.

¹ In domestic violence cases, assess relative caregivers' ability to support positive relationships with the non-offending parent/adult survivor, as well as promote healing from trauma.

<p><i>safely care for children and youth.</i></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure relatives are fully informed about the option to become licensed foster parents. Explain the merits of full licensing to potential relative caregivers. • Ensure relative caregivers have the necessary information and support to care for their children. See DPG ensure relative caregivers info.
<p>KCA 22 PLACEMENT PLANNING</p> <p><i>Work closely with members of the family team to make initial placement decisions, support those placements and plan for transitions.</i></p>	<p>Throughout the life of the case.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify, locate and assess family members (i.e. fictive kin, fathers and their families, incarcerated parents, mothers and their families) who should be involved in the placement planning process. • Prepare parents and potential caregivers to participate in the process of finding the most suitable placement for a child by explaining what it is about, how the information will be gathered, how the information will be used and how they can contribute to the decision. • Discuss with foster parents and other substitute caregivers the ways they can be active in the placement process (i.e. mentoring parents, speaking up for their own needs). • Ensure persons with the most knowledge about the children are involved in the search and identification of the most appropriate placements. • Plan for transitions for children from one placement to another with members of the team.
<p>KCA 23 PLACEMENT PLANNING</p> <p><i>Use assessment information to match children and youth to the most suitable placements.</i></p>	<p>Throughout the life of the case.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce trauma for children by matching them to the most appropriate placements and planning for transitions. See DPG reduce trauma matching placements. • Ask the child or youth where he or she would like to be placed. • Listen to the child or youth. • Ask parents and other family members for input on where child should be placed. • Consider the child’s needs, vulnerabilities, placement wishes, caregiver capacities, and potential for life-long permanency when assessing placement options. • Gather input from current and former caregivers as to the type and characteristics of the most suitable placement for the child. • Ask the persons responsible for placement in your county to help identify the full array of unrelated placement options that could meet the child’s need. Assess the needs, strengths and parental capacities of potential relative caregivers, foster parents or other caregivers. • Identify supports for children and caregivers that support placement stability, child safety and well-being.
<p>KCA 24 PLACEMENT PLANNING</p> <p><i>Use visits to preserve connections, strengthen relationships and make progress on identified goals.</i></p>	<p>Throughout the life of the case.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrange immediate, frequent visits between children and their parents throughout their time in care. • Prepare and support parents, families and children to make critical case decisions and participate as full members of family team. • Use assessment tools to determine how often and under what types of circumstances (i.e. supervised, unsupervised) children should be spending time with their own parents and siblings. • Plan for and use visits as a tool for maintaining relationships between children, their parents and siblings. • Visit children/ youth where they are placed to assess their adjustment to the placement, including the impact of separation from family, capacity of the substitute caregivers to meet the child’s needs and any emerging concerns related to the child’s physical, developmental, emotional and behavioral status. • Meet with children privately to discuss satisfaction with relationships, contacts with family members and siblings, and support needed to strengthen their important relationships.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interview foster parents and relative caregivers privately about child’s needs for and response to maintaining important connections. • Prepare parents/caregivers and children prior to visits on what to expect before, during and after visits and what support is needed for each of them to ensure physical and psychological safety. • Discuss and prepare foster parents and relative caregivers to support important connections for and with the child. • Provide supervision as may be needed to ensure child or youth safety and at the same time help them preserve important relationships being mindful of the impact of trauma. • Schedule visits when it is convenient and reasonable for the parent, child, and/or caregiver. • Check on progress toward agreed-upon goals, problem-solve and provide reassurance at every visit. • Provide feedback on what they have accomplished and discuss what may need to happen to achieve their goals during every visit. • Ask children, caregivers and parents for feedback on what you could do differently to assist them in achieving their goals.
<p>KCA 25 PLACEMENT PLANNING</p> <p><i>Facilitate parent involvement with their children.</i></p>	<p>Throughout the life of the case.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate parent involvement with their own children when they are in foster care. See DPG facilitate birth parent involvement. • Conduct icebreaker meetings with children, their current caregivers (i.e. foster parents or substitute caregivers) and their own parents to plan for ways to support each other and promote timely reunification. • Support parents in maintaining an active role in their child’s life during out-of-home placement. Shared parenting between foster and birth parents should be the expectation unless there are identified/agreed upon safety concerns. • Help children be in regular contact with their parents and siblings. This may be by email, telephone, in person visits, or participation in regular school or community activities. • Consult with parents in making daily decisions about the care, treatment and activities of their child or youth. • Make sure parents are invited and encouraged to participate in community events, school activities, church services and other activities their children are involved in doing. • Facilitate a productive working relationship between parents and foster parents. Encourage, where appropriate, for the parent and foster parent to develop a relationship without the worker’s direct, ongoing participation. • With approval and consultation from caregivers and parents, help them to develop plans for visits and other specific activities in which parents will participate (i.e. reading a book to a child at night, cooking dinner, accompanying to school meetings, etc.). • Attempt to place children in close proximity to parents to facilitate their involvement. • When necessary, help secure the support of family resources and other programs and persons who would be willing to help facilitate and/or supervise visits between parents and their children.
<p>KCA 26 PLACEMENT PLANNING</p>	<p>Throughout the life of the case.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help children stay connected to their siblings. See DPG help connect to siblings. • Facilitate visitation between siblings when they are not placed together. • When not placed together and appropriate, create a plan for helping siblings stay connected, including visits, phone calls, email or through other methods that work well for them. • Encourage and support foster parents and other caregivers to ensure sibling connections are maintained and take place in their homes or as part of other community events or activities to feel normal and regular.

*Help children stay
connected to their
siblings.*

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