



Case Planning Desk Reference for Emergency Situations



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In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, States experienced circumstances that had never before been experienced in such magnitude and with such far-reaching impact. While disasters had been experienced before, no single prior disaster had the impact of this experience. This event has awakened the child welfare field to the need for more extensive planning for the future. While everyone hopes that there will never again be a disaster with the impact of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, the reality exists that disasters will occur in the future and planning now can lessen the impact such disasters could have on child welfare programs across the country.

As a result of such planning, the State of Louisiana asked AdoptUsKids to prepare a reference guide for their staff who might face future situations where children in care are displaced from the State or their parish of jurisdiction, from their birth parents, from their case workers and/or from the courts that held jurisdiction. Continuing efforts to achieve permanency for children in care becomes a greater challenge in the wake of such calamity.

The intent of this guide is to assist the worker in developing a well-informed recommendation to the court based upon thoughtful planning and sufficient information. It is not intended to make individual case decisions but rather to ensure critical elements are considered. While there may not be answers to every question, using these questions as a guide will assist in providing documentation to support and inform a caseworker's recommendations.

This guide is based upon two basic assumptions: 1) Safety of the child is first and foremost, and 2) Obtaining permanency that affords a sense of belonging is first and foremost in a child's or youth's case plan. While it is recognized that the ultimate decision maker will be the court of jurisdiction, the agency has an obligation to provide the court with critical information and the rationale considered leading to any recommendation they may make to the court.

Instructions

This Case Planning Desk Reference For Emergency Situations builds upon itself.

Therefore, in all situations regardless of the child's legal status or special circumstances, the caseworker's first step will be to review the checklist entitled *Case Planning Considerations – Initial Questions to Consider for All Cases* to ensure that all of these elements have been addressed.

Once that is done, the second step will be to consider which of the remaining checklists – developed with unique case situations in mind – will best meet the child's individual circumstances. Using that checklist as a guide, the caseworker will then address each of those elements as s/he considers the 'next steps' in the case plan.

These checklists are not inclusive of every possible situation that may arise. However, it is believed that they will address the vast majority of circumstances and will serve to better inform the caseworker's planning, case decisions and recommendations to the court – specifically when dealing with circumstances brought on by disaster.

Case Planning Considerations – Initial Questions to Consider for All Cases

- Is the child safe in their current placement?
How is that being assessed?
- If the child is part of a sibling group, is s/he placed with their siblings in the same home?
 - If not, is there a plan to place them together?
 - If there is no plan to place them together, how will ties be maintained and/or visitation occur?
 - If sibling visitation is not to occur, why not and how will ties be maintained?
 - If barriers to placement as a sibling group and/or visitation have been identified, what steps have been made to address them?
- Does the child have any outstanding medical or emotional/behavioral problems not yet resolved?
 - What special services does the child require?
 - Are these services available and being utilized where the child is currently located?
 - If not, what is being done to secure these services?
 - If the child is out of their legal jurisdiction, have you contacted a caseworker in the sister State agency or sister parish in an effort to get the services for the child? What was the result?
- How does the child feel about their placement setting, visitation plan and related issues?
- Are the child's educational needs being met?
 - If not, what is being done to address the barriers and/or lack of appropriate services?
- If appropriate, is parent/child visitation taking place?
 - If not, what are the barriers and what is being done to address them?
- What additional services need to be put in place to finalize the permanency goal?
- Will transfer of jurisdiction be necessary?
 - If yes, what factors make that necessary?
- If the child and relative/guardian home are out-of-state and an imminent return does not look likely, has ICPC been initiated?
 - What is the status?

Case Planning Checklist – When REUNIFICATION is the Plan

- Are the birth parents and/or legal father/s whereabouts/addresses known?
 - If not, what is being done to find out this information?
 - If yes, have they been served?
 - If not, what barriers prevent them from being served?
 - What must occur to remove the barrier/s?

- Is there regular visitation with the child?
 - If not, what are the barriers?
 - What is being done to eliminate the barriers?
 - Is there coordination work taking place between the primary caseworker and the one in the sister State or sister parish?

- What is expected of the birth parents for the child to return home?
 - Does the current plan ensure safety?
 - Does the current plan remedy the situation that led to removal?
 - Is the current plan realistic?

- What services should the parents be receiving to help them complete their plan?
 - Are the services currently available to them?
 - Would the necessary services be available if they returned to the parish of legal jurisdiction?

- Is there a concurrent plan in place?
 - If yes, what is it?
 - Is the concurrent plan still realistic?

- Do the birth parents plan to return to the parish of legal jurisdiction?
 - If yes, when?

- Will an extension of foster care be necessary?
 - If so, what specific reasons make this necessary?
 - Why would an extension be in the best interest of the child?

- Is there a reasonable likelihood that the parent/s will be able to comply with the plan if an extension is granted?
 - How soon would that be likely to occur?
 - Has a return home date been identified?
 - What is the tentative date?

- If the child and relative/guardian home are out-of-state and an imminent return does not look likely, has ICPC been initiated?
 - What is the status?

Case Planning Checklist – When TRANSFER TO RELATIVE/GUARDIANSHIP is the Plan

- What services does the relative/guardian need to address the needs of the children?
 - Are the services currently available to them and being utilized?
 - Would the necessary services be available if they returned to the parish of legal jurisdiction?

- Has the child/ren visited in the relative/guardian home?
 - Does the child/ren want to be placed in the home?
 - Has a home study/family assessment been completed?
 - If so, was it approved?

- What is the relationship between the prospective relative/guardian and the parents?

- Does the relative/guardian plan to return to the parish of legal jurisdiction?
 - If so, when?

- Will transfer of jurisdiction be necessary?
 - If so, when?

- If the child and relative/guardian are currently living out-of-state and an imminent return does not look likely, has ICPC been initiated?
 - What is the status?

Case Planning Checklist - When ADOPTION Is the Plan and the CHILD/YOUTH IS AVAILABLE

(TPRs and/or parental surrenders/relinquishments have been secured)

- Have kin been considered?
 - If not, why not?
- How does the child feel about the plan of adoption?
- Are the current foster parent/s interested in adopting this child/youth?
- Has any adoption preparation taken place with the child?
 - If not, how will this occur?
- Do the foster parent/s plan to return to the parish of legal jurisdiction?
 - If yes, when?
 - If no (and the foster parent/s are residing out-of-state), has ICPC been initiated to address certification of the foster home?
- If an adoptive home has been identified and the child and home are currently residing out-of-state:
 - Who will supervise the adoptive placement?
 - Is a purchase of service contract with a private agency for supervision/finalization feasible?
- If an adoptive home has not been identified, what efforts are being made to identify an adoptive parent?
 - Has the child/youth been referred for recruitment services?
 - Has the child/youth been photolisted?
 - What is the status of these processes?

Case Planning Checklist – When ADOPTION is the Plan but CHILD IS NOT YET AVAILABLE

(TPRs and/or parental surrenders/relinquishments are pending)

NOTE: Utilization of this checklist assumes that the *Adoption and Child/Youth is Available* checklist has been completed.

- Has the TPR petition been filed?
 - If not, what are the barriers?
 - If yes, what is the status?
 - Has a trial date been set?

- Are the whereabouts and/or addresses of the birth parents and or/legal father known?
 - Have they been served?
 - Are there barriers that prevent them from being served?
 - If yes, what must occur to remove the barrier/s?

Case Planning Checklist – When ANOTHER PLANNED PERMANENT LIVING ARRANGEMENT (APPLA) is the Plan

- Have other permanency options been fully considered and ruled out for valid reasons?
- What has been done or is being done to secure a permanent lifelong connection with an adult for this child/youth?
- What services do the foster parents need to address the needs of the child/youth?
 - Are the services currently available to them and being utilized?
 - Would the necessary services be available if they returned to the parish of legal jurisdiction?
- How does the child/youth feel about the placement and plan of alternative planned living arrangement?
- Does the foster parent plan to return to the parish of legal jurisdiction?
 - If so, when?
- Will transfer of legal jurisdiction be necessary?
 - If yes, what factors make that necessary?
- If the current home for the child and relative/guardian is out-of-state and an imminent return does not look likely, has ICPC been initiated?
 - What is the status?