

Child Protective Services: Juvenile Court Placement Issues

2102.13 Comprehensive Child and Family Assessment and Initial Case Plan

Requirement

Complete a Comprehensive Child and Family Assessment (CCFA) and develop an Initial Case plan within thirty days of the date of placement on all children entering care (O.C.G.A. 15-11-58, Juvenile Court Code).

Submit the Initial Case plan to the court within 30 days of the date of a child's removal from the home.

Procedures/Practice Issues

It is the county's option to determine whether the CCFA (See Foster Care Manual, Section 1006.1) and the initial case plan is completed by the CPS case manager, the placement case manager or by both through collaboration. One of the case managers must take responsibility for giving the parent a JJ vs. Ledbetter notice (See Foster Care Manual, Section 1013).

Initial Case plan, (Goals and Steps) are the written documents, which constitute this Initial Case plan.

There are two types of Initial Case plans that are distinguished by the proposed outcome of the plan:

- Initial Case plan for Reunification, and
- Initial Case plan when Reunification is **not Appropriate**. This includes a statement of the factual basis for recommending to the court that reunification is not appropriate.

Schedule a meeting for Case plan development that includes the parents, citizen review panel members (if one is designated by the court for such purpose) and child (when available). Give parents written notice, at least five days in advance of the Case plan meeting and advise them that the plan resulting from this meeting will be submitted to the court to become an order of the court. Develop the initial Case plan in consultation with those present at the meeting. Ensure that the initial Case plan address all needs identified on the CCFA tool.

Include in the report to the court any dissenting recommendations made by the citizen review panel and any recommendations from the parents. If the submitted plan proposes reunification services and no hearing is requested, the court should enter a Dispositional Order or Supplemental Order incorporating all elements of the plan for reunification services which the court finds essential to reunification of the child with the family. The order should specify what all parties must accomplish before reunification of the family can be achieved.

If reunification is not in the best interest of the child, upon proper notice being provided to the parents, the court should, no later than 30 days following the filing of the plan, hold a hearing to review the plan. It is the court's responsibility to determine, by clear and convincing evidence, whether reasonable efforts to reunify a child and family will be detrimental to the child and, if so, that reunification services should not be provided or should be terminated.

The presumption is that reunification services should not be provided if the court finds by clear and convincing evidence that:

Child Protective Services: Juvenile Court Placement Issues

- The parent has unjustifiably failed to comply with a previously ordered plan designed to reunite the family;
- A child has been removed from the home on at least two previous occasions and reunification services were made available on those occasions; or,
- Any of the grounds for terminating parental rights exist (See [O.C.G.A. 15-11-94](#) and [2102.20](#)).

Be aware, when reviewing the grounds for terminating parental rights, of the historical basis of the reasons the court may use in determining whether a child is deprived. The facts of a parent's previous history of providing for a child currently in DFCS custody, and the parent's history pertaining to any other children, become crucial information. Having these facts helps with a decision that reunification services should not be provided. These facts provide the documentation that is presented to the court when the Initial Case plan recommends that reunification is not in the best interest of the child (See [2102.1](#)).