

Child Protective Services: Juvenile Court Placement Issues

2102.14 Developing the Initial Case Plan

Requirement

Ensure that the Initial Case Plan addresses all needs identified on the risk assessment tool.

Focus the written Initial Case Plan on:

- The proposed reunification services which will make it possible for the child to be returned safely to the family (reunification Initial Case Plan), **or**,
- The facts supporting why reunification services should not be provided and why this is not in the best interest of the child (non-reunification case/case plan).

At the completion of the Initial Case Plan, the parent must be given:

- A copy of the Initial Case Plan,
- Written notice that the plan will be made the order of the court, and
- Notice that the parent has the right to request a hearing before the court within five days from the date the copy of the plan is received.

Procedures/Practice Issues

An Initial Case Plan recommending reunification services is in effect prior to the time it is incorporated into an order by the court. Once the plan is court-ordered, only the court may modify the order. If changes are necessary to a court ordered plan, the modified plan must be submitted to the court for approval.

- Address in the Initial Case Plan each reason that requires removal and include the following:
- Why the child was placed in foster care, including a statement of the reasons why the child cannot be adequately protected at home and the harm which may occur if the child remains in the home;
- A description of services already offered and/or provided to prevent removal of the child from the home;
- A discussion of how the plan is designed to achieve a placement in the least restrictive, most family-like setting available and in close proximity to the home of the parents, consistent with the best interest and special needs of the child;
- A clear description of (1) the specific actions to be taken by the parents, (2) the specific services to be provided by DFCS and (3) specific services from other providers. All actions and services are focused on accomplishing identified changes that are required prior to a child returning home. Include specific time frames for completing steps toward goal accomplishment;
- The agency's plan to ensure that the child receives proper care in placement including services to the foster parents and to the child;

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- Information, to the extent available and accessible, about the child (including names and addresses of health and educational providers) in the areas of: medical history, known medical problems, medications, immunizations, current health status, dental status and educational status (grade level, type of classroom placement, performance, strengths/needs);
- The name of the case manager who is directly responsible for ensuring that the plan is implemented;
- Consideration of a reasonable visitation schedule which allows parents to maintain meaningful contact with children through personal visits, telephone calls and letters; and
- An agreement regarding contacts between the parent and agency so that the case manager relationship, especially as it relates to the Case plan is maintained. This may be stated as one of the steps determined necessary for meeting one or more of the listed goals.
- The plan for a situation where reunification is not appropriate, in addition to the above requirements, also includes:
- The reason the child was placed in foster care, including a statement of the reasons the child cannot be adequately protected at home, the harm which may occur if the child remains in the home and a description of the services offered and provided to prevent removal of the child from the home; and,
- A statement describing all reasons supporting a finding that reasonable efforts to reunify a child with the family will be detrimental to the child, and that reunification services, therefore, need not be provided.