

# Glossary of Key Terms for Infant-Toddler Court Teams

## *A Guide for Judges*



Quality Improvement Center  
*for* Research-Based  
Infant-Toddler Court Teams

The following glossary of terms serves as a reference for judges working with infant-toddler court teams.

### **Adjudication or Jurisdictional Hearing**

The legal proceeding where the Court determines whether there is the requisite evidence (preponderance, clear and convincing, or beyond a reasonable doubt, depending on the state's law) to adjudicate the child to be in need of the Court's aid, or to take jurisdiction of the case. If the burden of proof is not satisfied, the case is dismissed, the child remains in or is returned to the home, and the family is not required to participate in services.

### **Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997 (ASFA)**

Federal legislation that promotes (a) timely permanency planning and placement for children in foster care and (b) the importance of the safety and well-being of children. Extensive regulations promulgated in 2000 link funding to meeting permanency deadlines and delivery of services that satisfy reasonable efforts requirements. ASFA was prompted, in large part, to decrease time in foster care by presuming that a petition to terminate parental rights be filed if the child has been out of the custody of a parent for 15 of the last 22 months, unless an exception applies.

[www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PLAW-105publ89/pdf/PLAW-105publ89.pdf](http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PLAW-105publ89/pdf/PLAW-105publ89.pdf)

### **Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study**

The ACE Study is one of the largest investigations ever conducted to assess associations between childhood maltreatment and later-life health and well-being. The study is a collaboration between the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Kaiser Permanente's Health Appraisal Clinic in San Diego, by Drs. Robert F. Anda and Vincent J. Felitti. The study demonstrates childhood experiences that negatively affect children have many long-term adverse medical and emotional

effects. The higher the number of ACEs, the greater the likelihood of: severe and persistent emotional problems; health risk behaviors; serious social problems; adult disease and disability; high health, behavioral health, correctional, and social service costs; and poor life expectancy.

[www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/acestudy](http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/acestudy)

### **Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ)**

The ASQ editions are developmental screening tools appropriate for children ages 1 month to 5.5 years. The tools are research-based, reliable, and validated. The ASQ Third Edition (ASQ-3) uses drawings and simple directions to help parents elicit and indicate child's language, personal-social, motor, and cognition skills. The ASQ Social-Emotional (ASQ-SE) screens for emotional and behavioral problems. Both tools are available in English and Spanish.

<http://agesandstages.com>

### **American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry**

The American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry provides recommendations for periodicity of examination, preventive dental services, anticipatory guidance, and oral treatment for children ages 6 to 12 months, 12 to 24 months, 2 to 6 years, 6 to 12 years, and 12 years and older.<sup>1</sup> All children should have an established dental home by 12 months.

[www.aapd.org/media/Policies\\_Guidelines/G\\_Periodicity.pdf](http://www.aapd.org/media/Policies_Guidelines/G_Periodicity.pdf)

### **American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) Schedule for Preventive Pediatric Care**

The AAP has developed recommendations for preventive pediatric health care. The guidelines represent a consensus by the AAP and Bright Futures. They are intended for the care of children who are receiving competent parenting, have no manifestations of any important health problems, and are growing and developing in satisfactory fashion. The AAP stresses that additional visits may become necessary if circumstances suggest variations from normal. The AAP schedule recommends that children receive preventive pediatric health care visits: prenatally, at birth, within 5 days of birth, and at ages 1 month, 2 months, 4 months, 6 months, 9 months, 12 months, 15 months, 18 months, 24 months, 30 months, 3 years, and annually thereafter. The AAP, Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices, and the American Academy of Family Physicians have also approved a new version of the recommended immunization schedule for children ages birth to 6 years old.

[www.aap.org](http://www.aap.org)

[www.cdc.gov/vaccines/schedules/hcp/child-adolescent.html](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/schedules/hcp/child-adolescent.html)

### **Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (APPLA)**

A permanency outcome other than termination of parental rights or adoption. APPLA is not a preferred permanency plan for children.

## **Appeal**

A request to a higher court (Supreme Court or Court of Appeals in most states) to review and change the decision of a lower court based on error or abuse of discretion. It may or may not be a forum for challenging the findings of fact, depending on individual states' rules and statutes.

## **Attorney / Lawyer**

The attorney advocates for what the client wants. Attorneys have an ethical duty to advocate zealously within the bounds of the law as well as to provide counsel regarding procedures and options.

## **Audit or Title IV-E Review**

Multidisciplinary teams periodically review child welfare files in states that draw down Title IV-E of the Social Security Act reimbursements for foster care to determine if the state agency is in compliance with ASFA regulations. Failure to meet high standards may result in a Corrective Action Plan and/or loss of Title IV-E funding.

## **Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA)**

CAPTA is the key federal legislation addressing child abuse and neglect. It provides federal funding to states in support of prevention, assessment, investigation, prosecution, and treatment activities and also provides grants to public agencies and nonprofit organizations, including Indian Tribes and Tribal organizations, for demonstration programs and projects. In addition, CAPTA identifies the federal role in supporting research, evaluation, technical assistance, and data collection activities. CAPTA also sets forth a minimum definition of child abuse and neglect. CAPTA requires state early intervention and child welfare systems to establish coordinated procedures for the referral to Part C of the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act of infants and toddlers who are the victims of substantiated cases of maltreatment, illegal drug exposure, or Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders.

[www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/factsheets/about](http://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/factsheets/about)

## **Child and Family Services Improvement and Innovation Act**

The Child and Family Services Improvement and Innovation Act of 2011 instituted a new requirement for states to describe in their child welfare plans how they promote permanency for, and address the developmental needs of, young children in their care. Specifically, state plans must “include a description of the activities that the State has undertaken to reduce the length of time children who have not attained 5 years of age without a permanent family, and the activities the State undertakes to address the developmental needs of such children who receive benefits under this part or part E.”<sup>ii</sup> The Act also requires states to outline how emotional trauma associated with a child’s maltreatment and removal from home will be monitored and treated, and to design services and activities that facilitate contact between young children and their parents and siblings as a component of time-limited family

reunification services. These requirements offer an opportunity for states to be more intentional in their efforts to meet the unique needs of infants, toddlers, and their families known to the child welfare system.

[www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PLAW-112publ34/pdf/PLAW-112publ34.pdf](http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PLAW-112publ34/pdf/PLAW-112publ34.pdf)

### **Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP)**

In order to receive federal funding under Title IV-B of the Social Security Act, a state or tribal agency requesting Title IV-B funds must submit a 5-year CFSP. The CFSP—a strategic plan that sets forth a state's or tribe's vision and goals to strengthen its child welfare system—provides an opportunity to lay the groundwork for a system of coordinated, integrated, culturally relevant family-focused services. It outlines initiatives and activities that the state or tribe will carry out over the next 5 years to administer and integrate programs and services to promote the safety, permanency, and well-being of children and families.

[www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/programs/state-tribal-cfsp](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/programs/state-tribal-cfsp)

### **Child and Family Services Review (CFSR)**

The Children's Bureau conducts periodic reviews of state child welfare systems, with the goal of: ensuring conformity with federal child welfare requirements, determining what is actually happening to children and families as they are engaged in child welfare services, and assisting states in helping children and families achieve positive outcomes. Multidisciplinary teams conduct in-depth interviews and file reviews, after which states develop a Program Improvement Plan (PIP) to address areas in their child welfare services that need improvement. States that do not meet standards are subject to a Corrective Action Plan and potential financial penalties.

[www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/monitoring/child-family-services-reviews](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/monitoring/child-family-services-reviews)

### **Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP)**

CHIP provides health coverage to children in families with incomes too high to qualify for Medicaid but who cannot afford private coverage. Signed into law in 1997, CHIP provides federal matching funds to states to providing this coverage.

[www.medicaid.gov](http://www.medicaid.gov)

### **Child-Parent Psychotherapy (CPP)**

CPP is an evidence-based, dyadic, relationship-based treatment for infants, toddlers, and young children under 6 years old and their parents who have been traumatized by child abuse, neglect, sexual abuse, domestic violence, and other types of traumas. The goal of CPP is to help heal the relationship and reestablish a sense of safety and trust within the parent-child relationship.

[http://nctsn.org/sites/default/files/assets/pdfs/cpp\\_general.pdf](http://nctsn.org/sites/default/files/assets/pdfs/cpp_general.pdf)

<http://legacy.nreppadmin.net/ViewIntervention.aspx?id=194>

### **Concurrent Planning**

Promotes timely permanence for children in foster care by pursuing reunification and other permanency options simultaneously from the date of the child's placement in foster care. Institutionalization of the process requires active promotion by the court, clarity and services for birth parents, training and support for caseworkers, and processes for recruiting and training foster families or relative placements (kinship care) willing to actively support reunification and later to adopt if that is the outcome.

[www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/issue-briefs/concurrent-evidence](http://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/issue-briefs/concurrent-evidence)

### **Contrary to Welfare Findings**

Every initial court order authorizing the removal of a child must contain a case-specific and child-specific statement describing why it would be contrary to the child's welfare to remain in the home. Failure to include this information will disqualify the child welfare agency from drawing down federal Title IV-E reimbursements for the life of the case, including but not limited to foster care and adoption subsidies.

### **Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA)**

A specially trained, non-lawyer volunteer appointed by the Court to be the child's voice in Court, to represent the child's best interests, and to report directly to the Court.

[www.casaforchildren.org](http://www.casaforchildren.org)

### **Court Improvement Program (CIP)**

In 1994, The Federal Government, in partnership with the Kellogg Foundation, offered grants to each state to review their own court practices and assess the extent to which the requirements facilitated or impeded the achievement of the program goals of Title IV-E. Under the CIP grant, each state court system conducted a rigorous assessment of how state courts are handling abuse, neglect, and foster care litigation and developed a plan to improve the administration of justice in foster care cases and implement the plan for improvement. The work focused on: the timeliness of decision-making, the quality of proceedings, the quality of representation, and the treatment of the parties by the courts. CIP funding, through Title IV-B, continues to provide states with opportunities to improve outcomes for dependent children and their families.

[www.childwelfare.gov/topics/systemwide/courts/reform/cip](http://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/systemwide/courts/reform/cip)

### **Cultural Competence**

By working to understand the cultural needs of families within systems of care, service providers convey the importance of respect, dignity, nondiscrimination, and self-determination to all participants.<sup>iii</sup> An individual's or family's culture can affect the kinds of services needed, as well as the optimal place, time, and method of delivering services and supports. Addressing issues of culture, race, class, and ethnic background increases the likelihood of family engagement and a positive

intervention. By working to understand the cultural needs of the families within systems of care, service providers convey the importance of respect, dignity, nondiscrimination, and self-determination to all participants.<sup>iv</sup> Cultural competence requires consideration of cultural and religious beliefs as well as the family's primary language to make the most appropriate placement for the child to honor the family's belief system.

### **Custodian**

The person(s) with whom the Court says the child must live. This person may or may not also serve as the child's guardian (the person with the legal right to make certain decisions).

### **Deposition**

Formal pre-trial discovery during which the sworn witness provides a recorded statement prior to the hearing. Generally all the attorneys are present and the parties may also be there. The judge does not attend; however, the format of the event is similar to that of a court hearing, with questions and answers provided under oath.

### **Differential Response (Alternative Response)**

In traditional child protective service systems without differential response, there is only one response to all reports. Child welfare workers investigate the allegation with a resulting formal disposition indicating whether maltreatment occurred. Research indicates that this single approach is not effective in all types of reports of maltreatment.<sup>v</sup> In differential response, child protective services offer both traditional investigations and assessment alternatives to families reported for child abuse and neglect, depending on the severity of the allegation and other considerations. The introduction of differential response has been driven by the desire to be more flexible in exposure or Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders, responding to child abuse and neglect reports, recognizing that an adversarial focus is neither needed or helpful for all cases, understanding better the family issues that lie beneath maltreatment reports, and engaging parents more effectively to use services that address their specific needs. For high-risk reports, an investigation generally ensues. For low- and moderate-risk cases with no immediate safety concerns, a family assessment is conducted to gauge the family's needs and strengths and refers them on to appropriate community-based resources.

[www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/issue\\_briefs/differential\\_response](http://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/issue_briefs/differential_response)

### **Disposition**

The legal proceeding following adjudication to determine the plan for the child and family's safety, permanency, and well-being. Disposition determines the physical placement of the child and services that will be offered to support reunification. Disposition is followed by periodic reviews and a permanency hearing. This hearing

is an opportunity for problem-solving and case planning. It should be held within 30–45 days of adjudication.

### **Early Head Start (EHS)**

EHS provides early, continuous, intensive, and comprehensive child development and family support services to low-income infants and toddlers and their families, and pregnant women and their families. The mission of EHS is to improve prenatal outcomes and promote the intellectual, social, and emotional development of infants and toddlers in a way that supports the whole child within the context of the family, home, and other child-serving settings.

<http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/ehsnrc/about-ehs>

### **Early Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment (EPSDT)**

A comprehensive medical treatment and prevention service available to Medicaid-eligible children under 21 years old. Screening includes physical examinations, lab tests, developmental questionnaires, hearing and vision, and child and family history.

[www.medicaid.gov/Medicaid-CHIP-Program-Information/By-Topics/Benefits/Early-and-Periodic-Screening-Diagnostic-and-Treatment.html](http://www.medicaid.gov/Medicaid-CHIP-Program-Information/By-Topics/Benefits/Early-and-Periodic-Screening-Diagnostic-and-Treatment.html)

### **Education Attorney ad Litem (EAL)**

Some states allow for the Court to specially appoint an attorney to oversee educational issues for a dependent child and make recommendations to the court.

### **Education Surrogate**

A person other than the child's parent who is authorized to make educational decisions for the child.

### **English as a Second Language (ESL) or English Language Learners (ELL)**

Services are available for persons whose primary language is not English. They are not included in IEPs and are not entitlements. The goal of these programs is to provide quality instruction to speakers of other languages to succeed in academic, work, or career programs.

### **Ex parte Communications**

Communication of any kind with the judge presiding over the case that does not include all parties. Such communications are generally unethical; however, some exceptions apply when the issue is immediate child safety.

### **Evidence-Based Practice (EBP)**

An approach to prevention or treatment that is validated by a form of documented scientific evidence. The QIC-CT recommends the use of evidence-based and evidence-informed practices that are: supported by evidence of efficacy and a strong theory of change with infants, toddlers, and families in the child welfare system; guided by elements of early development and attachment between young children

and their parents and caregivers; and informed with family, community, and professional values.

[www.qicct.org/evidence-based](http://www.qicct.org/evidence-based)

### **Family-Centered Practice**

A way of working with families, both formally and informally, across service systems to enhance their capacity to care for and protect their children. It focuses on the needs and welfare of children within the context of their families and communities. Family-centered practice recognizes the strengths of family relationships and builds on these strengths to achieve optimal outcomes. Family is defined broadly to include birth, blended, kinship, and foster and adoptive families.

### **Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)**

FERPA (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) is a federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education. FERPA gives parents certain rights with respect to their children's education records, access to their child's education records, an opportunity to seek to have the records amended, and some control over the disclosure of information from the records.

[www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html](http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html)

### **Family Group Decision-Making**

A collection of family intervention approaches (family team meeting, family unity meeting, team decision-making, family group conferencing) in which family members, other important supportive individuals selected by the family, and professionals working with families come together to make decisions about caring for their children and develop a service plan. A skilled facilitator assists in this non-adversarial, strength-based process.

### **Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD)**

FASD describes a group of disorders that can occur in a person whose mother drank alcohol during pregnancy. These effects can include physical, behavior, and learning problems. Often, a person with an FASD has a mix of these problems. FASDs are a leading known cause of intellectual disability, birth defects, and brain damage. Screening and assessments are necessary to ensure the child receives all appropriate service.

[www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/fasd/facts.html](http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/fasd/facts.html)

### **Fictive Kin**

Persons with strong connections to the family who are not related biologically.

## **Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008**

Fostering Connections (Public Law 110-351) connects and supports relative caregivers, improves outcomes for children in foster care, provides for Tribal foster care and adoption access, and improves incentives for adoption. The Act requires the state to use due diligence to identify and provide notice to all appropriate adult relatives within 30 days after removal of a child from the child's parents that the child has been removed from the parent's custody, options the relative may have under the law to participate in the care and placement of the child, and requirements necessary to become a foster family home. The law also requires that reasonable efforts are made to place siblings together unless such placement would be contrary to the safety or well-being of the siblings. If not placed together, frequent ongoing sibling contact is required unless it would be contrary to the safety or well-being of any of the siblings.

[www.childwelfare.gov/topics/systemwide/laws-policies/federal/fosteringconnections/](http://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/systemwide/laws-policies/federal/fosteringconnections/)

## **Guardian**

A person appointed by the Court who has the legal right to make important decisions in a child's life, such as medical, psychiatric, or surgical treatment and adoption, and to make other decisions involving protection, education, care, and control of the child. This person may or may not also serve as the child's custodian.

## **Guardian ad Litem (GAL)**

The Court appoints a guardian ad litem to advocate for the best interest of the child. This appointee may also serve as the child's attorney (whose role is to advocate for what the child wants) unless there is a conflict in fulfilling both roles. GAL duties typically include visiting the child's home and residence; interviewing teachers, doctors, dentists, therapists, and other providers; attending hearings; and filing reports with the Court. GALs may also be appointed to represent the best interests of adult parties if the party is incapacitated.

## **Home Visiting Services**

Through the use of a home visitor, at-risk families are connected to a comprehensive and coordinated system of care for families of children prenatally through prekindergarten. Voluntary programs focus on providing high-quality, affordable early care and education, health and mental health, and family support services, and tailor services to meet the needs of individual families and provide services directly in the child's home. In 2010, Congress established the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program (MIECHV) to provide federal funds to states and Tribal entities to support voluntary, evidence-based home visiting services to at-risk families during pregnancy and to parents with young children up to 5 years old.

<http://mchb.hrsa.gov/programs/homevisiting/index.html>

### **Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978 (ICWA)**

Federal legislation designed to protect American Indian children and families involved in child welfare proceedings. When children who qualify for the protections of ICWA are placed out of the care of their parents, numerous requirements apply. These include, but are not limited to placement priorities, expert testimony (even when parties stipulate), and active (not just reasonable) efforts to provide remedial services and rehabilitative programs. Failure to comply with the Act may invalidate court orders, including, but not limited to, adoptions.

[www.nicwa.org/Indian\\_Child\\_Welfare\\_Act](http://www.nicwa.org/Indian_Child_Welfare_Act)

### **Individualized Education Plan (IEP)**

The federal Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) has identified 13 disabilities that qualify children 3 years old through high school or up to 22 years old for special education services. The child is entitled to assessments and an IEP. The IEP contains goals, services, child strengths, and present level of performance. It is important that the parent or education surrogate attend all IEP meetings.

<http://idea.ed.gov>

### **Individualized Family Services Plan (IFSP)**

Under Part C of IDEA, each infant or toddler with a disability and their family must receive a written IFSP developed by a multidisciplinary team, including the parents. The IFSP must include a description of the appropriate transition services for the infant or toddler, including a statement of: the infant's or toddler's present levels of physical development, cognitive development, communication development, social or emotional development, and adaptive development, based on objective criteria; the family's resources, priorities, and concerns; a statement of the measurable results or outcomes expected to be achieved; specific early intervention services; a statement of the natural environments in which early intervention services will appropriately be provided; the projected dates for services; identification of the service coordinator; and the steps to be taken to support the transition of the toddler to preschool or other appropriate services.

<http://idea.ed.gov/explore/view/p/,root,statute,I.C.636>

### **Interrogatories**

Formal pre-trial discovery consisting of written questions to which a party or witness must respond under oath in writing.

### **Interstate Compact for Placement of Children (ICPC)**

Children cannot be transferred to the custody of a person residing in another state unless there is an approved home study in the receiving state and their state child welfare agency agrees to supervise the case. A child who is placed in violation of the compact may never qualify for funded services in the receiving state, including, but

not limited to Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Medicaid coverage, adoption incentives, foster care stipends, Part C of IDEA services, and more.

[www.childwelfare.gov/topics/permanency/interjurisdictional/icpc/](http://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/permanency/interjurisdictional/icpc/)

### **Judicial Notice**

The Court can take judicial notice of a fact that is common knowledge and no independent evidence needs to be presented. The party simply requests that the Court take judicial notice of the fact, e.g., January 10, in 2016, was a Sunday.

### **Jurisdiction**

The Court must determine if it has jurisdiction, or authority, over the subject matter and parties before hearing the case or entering valid orders.

### **Kinship Care**

Kinship care refers to placements of children with relatives or close family friends (fictive kin). Relatives are typically the preferred placement, as it supports and maintains children's connections with their families. It is often considered a type of family preservation service.

### **Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)**

A federally funded program that provides financial assistance to households, especially those that pay a high proportion of household income for home energy.

[www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ocs/liheap](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ocs/liheap)

### **Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV)**

The 2010 Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act allocated significant funds to states to expand evidence-based home visiting programs in at-risk communities. MIECHV also provides funding for states to establish voluntary home visiting programs that offer information, guidance, and support directly in the home environment for families prenatally through prekindergarten.

<http://mchb.hrsa.gov/programs/homevisiting/index.html>

### **Medical Home**

A medical home manages all aspects of pediatric care in one pediatric practice where medical staff come to know a child's family and medical history. It provides well-child visits; immunizations; screening and assessments; patient and parent counseling about health, nutrition, safety, and mental health; and supervision of care. The pediatrician can also refer a child to specialized health care providers and early intervention services while coordinating care with other early childhood programs and services. The seven desirable characteristics of a medical home are: accessible, family-centered, continuous, comprehensive, coordinated, compassionate, and culturally effective.

## **Part C of the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)**

Part C is the Early Intervention Program for Infants and Toddlers With Disabilities. It is a federal grant program that assists states in operating a comprehensive statewide program of early intervention services for children from birth to 3 years old who have developmental delays or are at risk of developing a delay or special need that may affect their development or impede their education. Part C can help ensure that very young children's developmental needs are met through services such as occupational and speech therapies, counseling, nursing services, transportation, and more. Every child with a substantiated case of abuse and neglect is entitled to referral and assessment for services.

<http://idea.ed.gov/part-c/search/new>

## **Permanency**

Legal permanency occurs when a child is returned home, adopted, or placed in a permanent guardianship or custody of another person.

## **Permanency Hearing**

A court hearing used to review the status and determine the permanent placement of children who have been placed in out-of-home care, including foster care. ASFA requires that the status of each child in out-of-home care be reviewed at least once every 6 months by either a court or an administrative review. In addition, under ASFA, a permanency planning hearing must be held within 12 months of the date the child entered care.

## **Permanency Plan**

This plan is developed by the child welfare agency with the child's parents. It includes the goal for the child's permanency, the tasks required to achieve the goal, and the roles and responsibilities of all involved. The child welfare agency is required to provide updated permanency plans to the Court at least every 6 months. The Court may either accept, reject, or modify the plan.

## **Petition**

The formal written document filed with the Court requesting judicial action including a request that the child be found to be in need of the Court's protection. The Petition also gives detailed notice of the conduct or actions resulting in the filing of the document.

## **Placement Stability**

Ensuring that children remain in stable out-of-home care, avoiding disruption, removal, and repeated placements that have harmful effects on child development and well-being. In the Federal Child and Family Services Reviews, placement stability is one of the four composites used as the basis for national standards for

Permanency Outcome 1, that children have permanency and stability in their living situations.

### **Pre-removal Conference**

These events are initiated by the child welfare agency and facilitated by a trained facilitator, the investigative social worker, and the worker who will provide ongoing support. Discussion revolves around the reasons for removal, the family's strengths and challenges, services that could begin immediately, and the special needs of the children. Parents are seen as the experts about their children. There is a non-adversarial approach to problem solving. Relatives and other members of the parents' support system are also invited to participate.

### **Protective Factors**

Strengths and resources that appear to mediate or serve as a buffer against risk factors that contribute to maltreatment. These factors may strengthen the parent-child relationships, ability to cope with stress, and capacity to provide for children. The Center for the Study of Social Policy has identified five protective factors that can ameliorate risk of child abuse and neglect: parental resilience; social connections; knowledge of parenting and child development; concrete support in times of need; and social and emotional competence of children.

[www.cssp.org/reform/strengthening-families](http://www.cssp.org/reform/strengthening-families)

[www.cssp.org/reform/strengtheningfamilies/2015/Core-Meanings-of-the-SF-Protective-Factors-2015.pdf](http://www.cssp.org/reform/strengtheningfamilies/2015/Core-Meanings-of-the-SF-Protective-Factors-2015.pdf)

### **Reasonable Efforts (R/E)**

The State must provide reasonable efforts to eliminate the need for removal and achieve timely permanency by offering services specifically tailored to meet the individual needs of the family. The Court must make a determination within 60 days of removal and at least every 6 months thereafter as to whether the State has fulfilled this requirement. Failure to provide reasonable efforts may result in delayed permanency and loss of federal Title IV-E funding.

### **Respite Care**

Short-term child care services that offer temporary relief, improve family stability, and reduce the risk of abuse or neglect. It is available to birth parents, caregivers, kinship, and adoptive families. Respite can be planned or offered during emergencies or times of crisis.

### **Review Hearing**

These legal proceedings occur after disposition and before permanency hearings. They must be held at least every 6 months in order to satisfy federal laws; however, the better practice is to review cases more frequently.

### **Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS)**

Relief available to noncitizen minors who have been abused, neglected, or abandoned by one or both parents. To qualify, the child must be under 21 years old, unmarried, and the subject of certain dependency orders issued by a Juvenile Court.

[www.uscis.gov/green-card/special-immigrant-juveniles/special-immigrant-juveniles-sij-status](http://www.uscis.gov/green-card/special-immigrant-juveniles/special-immigrant-juveniles-sij-status)

### **Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)**

WIC provides federal grants to states for supplemental foods, health care referrals, and nutrition education for low-income pregnant, breastfeeding and non-breast-feeding postpartum women, and to infants and children up to 5 years old who are at nutritional risk.

[www.fns.usda.gov/wic/women-infants-and-children-wic](http://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/women-infants-and-children-wic)

### **Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)**

SAMHSA is the agency within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services that leads public health efforts to advance the behavioral health of the nation. SAMHSA's mission is to reduce the impact of substance abuse and mental illness on America's communities. SAMHSA offers numerous grant opportunities.

[www.samhsa.gov](http://www.samhsa.gov)

### **Sufficiency of Services Inquiry**

Courts are required to ask parties whether they are satisfied with the services they are receiving to ascertain the quality of the case plan and determine whether the family is receiving reasonable efforts to reunify. If there is an unmet need between hearings, the party's advocate should motion the Court for an immediate hearing if the problem cannot be resolved informally.

### **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)**

Previously known as the Food Stamp Program, SNAP is the nation's largest domestic food and nutrition assistance program for low-income individuals and families and provides economic benefits to communities.

[www.fns.usda.gov/snap/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-snap](http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-snap)

### **Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)**

TANF is a program designed to help families achieve self-sufficiency. TANF provides block grants to states to provide resources such as income support, transportation, and child care to families while the adults train or look for work.

[www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ofa/programs/tanf](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ofa/programs/tanf)

### **Termination of Parental Rights (TPR)**

The severance of the legal relationship between a birth or adoptive parent and a child. Following a TPR, the child is available for adoption.

### **Title IV-B**

The principal sources of federal funds dedicated for child welfare activities derive from Titles IV-B and IV-E of the Social Security Act. Title IV-B contains two parts, the first provides funding for child welfare services and the second for preventive and supportive services for families. Title IV-B is administered by the Children's Bureau within the Administration for Children and Families at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

[www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/programs/state-tribal-funding](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/programs/state-tribal-funding)

### **Title IV-E**

The principal sources of federal funds dedicated for child welfare activities derive from Titles IV-B and IV-E of the Social Security Act. Title IV-E comprises the Foster Care, Adoption Assistance, and Guardianship Assistance programs, and the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (including Education and Training Vouchers). Title IV-E is administered by the Children's Bureau within the Administration for Children and Families at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

[www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/programs/state-tribal-funding](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/programs/state-tribal-funding)

### **Title IV-E Waiver**

Waivers under Title IV-E of the Social Security Act grant flexibility in the use of Title IV-E funds for alternative services and supports that promote safety, permanency, and well-being for children in the child welfare system.

[www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/resource/cw-waiver-summary-2015](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/resource/cw-waiver-summary-2015)

### **Trauma-informed Care (TIC)**

Trauma-informed organizations, programs, and services are based on an understanding of the vulnerabilities or triggers of trauma survivors that traditional service delivery approaches may aggravate. Professionals who understand the impact of trauma on infant and child development can address trauma and minimize additional negative effects. Such professionals are key to providing trauma-informed care.

[www.samhsa.gov/nctic](http://www.samhsa.gov/nctic)

### **Uniform Child Custody and Jurisdiction Enforcement Act (UCCJEA)**

The state in which the child is found generally has exclusive jurisdiction to make custodial decisions. Exceptions to this rule are governed by the UCCJEA. Exceptions include, but are not limited to, lack of significant connection with the state, inconvenient forum, or the need for temporary emergency jurisdiction. Courts must work together across state lines at the earliest opportunity to determine which state has jurisdiction under the Act.

[www.uniformlaws.org/ActSummary.aspx?title=Child%20Custody%20Jurisdiction%20and%20Enforcement%20Act](http://www.uniformlaws.org/ActSummary.aspx?title=Child%20Custody%20Jurisdiction%20and%20Enforcement%20Act)

## Waiver of Reasonable Efforts

At or following a Disposition hearing, the Court may determine that reasonable efforts should be waived due to aggravated circumstances, which include, but are not limited to, abandonment, prior termination of parental rights with no reasonable likelihood circumstances have changed, or the murder of another child who was a member of the same family. When reasonable efforts are waived, there is no requirement for the child welfare agency to provide reunification services and the Court must conduct a Permanency hearing within 30 days of the date the requirements were waived. Specific grounds for waiver of reasonable efforts vary from state to state.

## Contact Us

For resources from the Quality Improvement Center for Research-Based Infant-Toddler Court Teams (QIC-CT), please visit [www.qicct.org](http://www.qicct.org).

For inquires on the QIC-CT, contact: [QIC-CT@zerotothree.org](mailto:QIC-CT@zerotothree.org).

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<sup>i</sup> American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry, "Guideline on Periodicity of Examination, Preventive Dental Services, Anticipatory Guidance/Counseling, and Oral Treatment for Infants, Children, and Adolescents." Reference Manual, 33, no. 6 (2010-2011): 102-108.

<sup>ii</sup> Child and Family Services Improvement and Innovation Act of 2011, 112th Cong., H.R. 2883, [www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PLAW-112publ34/pdf/PLAW-112publ34.pdf](http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PLAW-112publ34/pdf/PLAW-112publ34.pdf).

<sup>iii</sup> Child Welfare Information Gateway, "Systems of Care." Child Welfare Information Gateway, February 2008, <http://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/soc/soc.pdf>.

<sup>iv</sup> Ibid.

<sup>v</sup> Julie Cohen, Patricia Cole, and Jaclyn Szrom, A Call to Action on Behalf of Maltreated Infants and Toddlers. American Humane Association, Center for the Study of Social Policy, Child Welfare League of America, Children's Defense Fund and ZERO TO THREE, 2011, <https://www.zerotothree.org/acalltoaction>.