



PSP Practice Minute

Considering permanency options for children and young people in long term out-of-home care

This PSP Practice Minute guides permanency case planning and applies only to children¹ in out-of-home care where a final order has been made, this includes children in long term care.

When to consider permanency options for children in care

Permanency is part of every day casework

Consider a child's permanency as part of your *everyday casework* with children, families and carers. Casework, including conversations with children, families and carers, should be guided by the child's permanency goal. Understand what the child's life is like and what they want for their future through ongoing conversations. Always seek cultural consultations for Aboriginal² or culturally and linguistically diverse children.

Permanency options are considered through case planning

Consider the child's permanency options at their case plan meeting. Consider how the child's placement is providing them with the best opportunities for safety, stability, permanency, connection and wellbeing; or if an alternate permanency option would greater provide these².

Always focus permanency options on the:

- rights of the child to reach their potential
- views of the child and other important people in their life³
- quality of relationships the child has and what impact any decision will have on these
- child's long term experience of safety, security and belonging
- child's wellbeing across all domains of their life.

What is the difference between 'consider' and 'assess'?

Considering a permanency option and *assessing* a permanency option are not the same. They are two different activities.

To **consider** a permanency option means to take views and facts into account, and to weigh these up to decide if that option is realistic. There needs to be enough recent information to consider the option in a way that is informed, professional and ethical.

To **assess** a permanency option is a more vigorous and formal process. Only carry out an assessment once a permanency option is considered to be realistic and a decision has been made by FACS to change the child's case plan goal.

An assessment does not need to be carried out for one option before considering other

¹ Throughout this document 'child and young person' is shortened to 'child', and 'children and young people' is shortened to 'children'.

² Refer to the Aboriginal Case Management Policy for more information

³ Standard 5 and 6, NSW Child Safe Standards for Permanent Care.

permanency options. Where guardianship or adoption is considered to be realistic, an *assessment* of restoration is *not required* prior to changing the child's case plan goal.

Document the rationale for the decisions

Children and families have a right to understand why decisions have been made about their lives. Record a clear rationale (including the views and facts taken into account) about why each of the other permanency options would not give the same or better opportunities for the child.

More information

Refer to the Practice Advice topic attached to this Practice Minute on *Permanency planning: finding permanent relationships for children*.

For more information see the [Permanency Case Management Policy, Rules and Practice Guidance, Aboriginal Case Management Policy, NSW Child Safe Standards for Permanent Care](#).

Further guidance can also be found on [guardianship](#) and [open adoption](#) on the FACS website.

FACS casework practitioners can also access further practice advice and FACS practice mandates on the internal FACS Casework Practice site.

For questions about this Practice Minute please email permanency.support@facs.nsw.gov.au