

Practice Focus

<u>SUSTAINING PERMANENCY</u>	
What is it?	<p>The goal of sustaining permanency is that the family will have the resources they need to stay together.</p> <p><i>(Some of this information has been adapted from the Family Search and Engagement guide; copyright 2008, Catholic Community Services of Western Washington and EMQ Children and Family Services)</i></p> <p>A reminder about types of Permanency –</p> <p>Types of Permanency:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permanency - is defined as “having a relationship with at least one adult that is characterized by these five points: parenting; life-long intent; belonging; status; and, unconditional commitment.” The “Gold Standard” is achieving legal permanency for each child or youth in one of the following ways: reunification; adoption; or, legal guardianship. • Emotional Permanency – Appropriate, positive connections to adults who support the youth in a real, permanent way; elicit feelings of continuity, stability, and belonging. • Legal permanency - Permanent placement, either through reunification, kinship placement, or adoption.
What laws and rules (OAC) apply?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 • OAC 5101:2-39-01 Removal of a Child from the Child’s Own Home
Sustaining Permanency includes:	<p>At this point the child/ren/youth are either living with family or another permanent situation or is on the verge of living with family or another permanent situation or has established new family or lifelong connections. The role of ensuring that a plan for Sustaining Permanency is facilitated and created can be with the case worker with the help of the child/family team.</p> <p>Planning for Sustaining Permanency includes Legal, Financial, Safety, and Anticipation of Future Formal and Informal Needs.</p>

Legal: Legal status is explored including reunification, adoption, guardianship, or kinship care/legal custody. The legalities of placement, background checks, home inspections, safety checks and court procedures are processes that take the most time. Contingency plans options should be created so that everyone in the youth's life is cleared to provide support in emergency situations and understands their role in various situations that may occur. These scenarios need to be discussed with the entire support team so everyone's role is understood and shared.

Financial: Finances are key to address and can be a stumbling block to long term plans. Families with limited income or a family member who moves from being a foster care provider to adopting can lose funding that has supported the youth living with them. The team needs to ensure that financial needs are assessed and that any available resources are utilized. Contingency plans should include the "what ifs" and risks of the youth joining the family and exiting the system, thereby possibly losing eligibility for some resources.

Safety: Thorough attention to safety concerns is essential for long term success. This includes the areas mentioned above, as well as reviewing other risk factors. Possible risks include mental health issues, behavioral risks, responses to youth's actions, runaway behavior, verbal, physical, and substance abuse, and any others identified. It is important that the family members and other informal resources are organized to support each other with contingency plans in all areas. Written documentation and safety planning are the strongest ways to organize this process.

Anticipating the future formal needs: With any process there may be times that family and long term supports may need formal support again. Anticipate those times now so that significant concerns are not left unattended until too late. Ensure that formal resources are in place, or are identified for the future, to support the youth and family. The goal of this step is to support the continued success with family, and to avoid future separation. This may include planned formal support follow-up with the family as needed.

*A Family Team Meeting Facilitator can work with the Caseworker on facilitating the meeting and conversation with the entire team on developing the plan for Sustaining Permanency. This may take a

	<p>few meetings but if it can help ensure the stability and longevity of the placement it will be well worth it.</p>
<p>What team members may be experiencing during this stage:</p>	<p>Child/Youth: Depending on age, the child they may be experiencing feelings of satisfaction, completion and happiness. This may play out in positive behaviors and a new sense of energy and focus. The youth may also be experiencing a high level of anxiety and fear, as the youth may struggle with having a sense of future, family and stability. The youth’s equilibrium may also be off, leading to more testing behavior.</p> <p>Current Placement and Staff in an out of home placement: At this time, placement staff see their role in this youth’s life coming to an end. This may lead to a feeling of fulfillment and success as well as feelings of loss and fear that the youth will not succeed without them/their structure.</p> <p>Caseworker: This could be a very fulfilling part of the process. Staff may see the mission of their work and the reason why they do this being reinforced. Staff may also be experiencing difficulties letting go of their own support of the youth and family.</p> <p>Family/Connections: The family may be experiencing a sense of fulfillment and new promise for their future. They may also be experiencing a strong sense of anxiety and concern about taking on the responsibility. They may be wondering if this will work out and if they can handle it.</p>
<p>Tools</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Permanency Sustainment Planning ✓ Permanency Pact
<p>Documentation Suggestions/Reminders</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any FSE type of contact should be labeled in SACWIS with a Family Search and Engagement subcategory • Family and kin who are identified in a genogram activity log should also be added to the associated persons tab in SACWIS for <u>all</u> cases.
<p>Supervisor Strategies</p>	<p>Questions for supervisors to ask in the Sustaining Permanency Team Meeting (Adapted from Signs of Safety Supervision Recording Sheet from Lincolnshire childcare)</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there anything we are worried about? • What is working well within the placement? • What Supports are needed? <p>Another Supervision tool to consider that includes scaling and could identify areas of growth for a worker in working with a facilitating the family and youth planning for sustaining permanency is to think about these questions with your worker: Thinking of a scale from 1 to 10 with 1 being Never and 10 being Always where does your worker fall (having them rate themselves and comparing the ratings can be a helpful exercise. (Adapted from Signs of Safety® Supervisor Practice Fidelity Assessment Report completed in partnership with Casey Family Programs, 2012)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1- Listens to family members 2- Treats family members as unique individuals 3- Do what he/she says she will do 4- Works with humility (accepts that their judgements may have to change) 5- Is honest with family and the youth 6- Pays attention to what is working within the family 7- Tells the family and youth what he/she sees is working well 8- Involves family in figuring out what needs to happen to sustain permanency 9- Involves youth in the process 10- Helps ensure the youth’s voice is heard 		
<p>Training Suggestions via the Ohio Child Welfare Training Program</p> 	<p>E-Track # 210-26-NOS</p>	<p>Lifelong Connections: Permanency for Older Youth</p>	<p>6 Hour Classroom Learning</p>
	<p>E-Track # 210-39</p>	<p>Family Search and Engagement: The Path to Best Practice</p>	<p>6 Hour Classroom Learning</p>