

Module 12 Chapter 2: Out-of-Home Placement (OHP) Case Planning and Service Provision

Overview

Chapter 2 focuses on out-of-home placement case planning and service provision for children and families who are not governed by ICWA, including:

- Types of placement
- Placement decisions and foster care
- Preparation for placement
- The Out-of-Home Placement Plan (OHPP)
- Placement stability and services
- Concurrent Permanency Planning (CPP)
- Termination of foster care.

Reasonable Efforts

Agencies are required to make reasonable efforts to prevent placement except upon determination by the court that such efforts are not necessary.

This means:

- The agency has made reasonable efforts to prevent placement of the child in foster care by working with the family to develop and implement a safety plan, or
- Given the particular circumstances of the child and family at the time of the child's removal, there are no services or efforts available which could allow the child to remain safely in the home.

(Minnesota Statutes 260.012, located at <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/?id=260.012>)

Voluntary Placements

Voluntary placements are made through a written Voluntary Placement Agreement (VPA), signed by the parents and the agency. If the voluntary placement lasts longer than 90 days, the agreement must be reviewed by the juvenile court.

Minnesota Statutes 260C.201 (<https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/?id=260C.201>) governs the voluntary placement of children for reasons that are not due solely to disability. These placements do not occur because of developmental disability or emotional disturbance. (See also Juvenile Court Rule 42.)

Children may also enter placement for treatment through voluntary placement agreements governed under Minnesota Statutes 260D (<https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/?id=260D>). The paramount consideration of 260D is the child's safety, health, and best interests. The court provides annual reviews without taking custody or decision making away from the parents.

From the Attachments tab, print and review these documents for more details:

- Timing of Judicial Events for Voluntary Out-of-Home Placement When the Child is NOT Placed under Minnesota Statutes 260D
- Administrative and Judicial Events for a Child in Voluntary Foster Care for Treatment under Minnesota Statutes 260D.

Talk with your supervisor about the frequency of these placements and the types of services provided.

Involuntary Placements

Involuntary placements are made when the safety of the child cannot be assured by keeping the child at home. Remember, the legal authority for involuntary placements is through:

- A 72-hour law enforcement hold or
- A court order.

The remainder of this chapter addresses elements of involuntary placement.
(Minnesota Statutes 260C.175, <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/?id=260C.175>)

Foster Care

When a child enters placement, he or she enters foster care.

Based on statutory definition, foster families – also called resource families – need to be able and willing to:

- Offer a safe home that meets the child’s daily needs
- Accept the child as a unique individual
- Provide stability and consistency
- Preserve the child’s relationships and connections to birth parents, extended family, friends, school, culture and community
- Enable the child to live, or have frequent contact, with siblings
- Participate in reunification plans, unless the court decides otherwise
- Provide medical care, education and other services.

(Minnesota Statutes 260C.007, Subdivision 18,
<https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/?id=260C.007>)

Expectations

Foster parents and the agency work together and share responsibility to provide services. Each has expectations of the other based on identified responsibilities.

For a comprehensive list of shared expectations click the Agreement icon. When the list appears, you can print or simply review it. You are encouraged to become familiar with the expectations because they are rooted in statute and rule, and they embody best practice.

Reasons for Placement

The primary reason for out-of-home placement is safety. Another reason is child access to specialized treatment for identified needs.

The decision to place a child outside the home must always be made carefully; placement can be a traumatic experience. Talk with your supervisor to determine your agency's placement decision process.

MEPA/IEPA Provisions

Remember, the federal provisions of MEPA/IEPA must be followed – race, color and national origin of the foster or adoptive parent or child cannot be considered in making a placement decision. A good resource is DHS Bulletin 09-68-08, Clarifying Culture in Placement Decisions, http://www.dhs.state.mn.us/main/groups/publications/documents/pub/dhs16_146708.pdf. You will learn more about making placement decisions in classroom training.

Placement Preference

Statute helps you determine *where* to place the child. Placement needs to be made in the following order of preference:

1. With an individual who is related to the child by blood, marriage or adoption; or
2. With an individual who is an important friend with whom the child has resided or had significant contact.

(Minnesota Statutes 260C.212, <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/?id=260C.212>)

Best Interest Factors

Eight best interest factors must be considered when determining placement needs, including the child's:

- Current functioning and behaviors
- Medical, educational and developmental needs
- History and past experience
- Religious and cultural needs
- Connection with a community, school, and faith community
- Interests and talents
- Relationship to current caretakers, parents, siblings, and relatives; and
- The child's reasonable preference, if the court deems the child to be of sufficient age to express preferences.

When determining placement, you must describe through documentation how the proposed placement can meet the child's needs in each of the eight areas.

From the Attachments tab, print and review Placement Decisions for examples of how to document each of the eight factors.

(Minnesota Statute 260C.212, Subdivision 2, <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/?id=260C.212>.)

Placement Considerations

Placement should be in the least restrictive, most family-like setting

Placement should allow children to remain in contact with or geographically close to family members, community, school, social and cultural activities whenever possible.

Siblings

Minnesota Statutes require that siblings be placed together for foster care, adoption, or transfer of permanent legal and physical custody.

In order to separate siblings, it must be determined that:

- It is not in the best interests of a sibling to place them together
- Placement together is not possible after reasonable efforts have been made.

If siblings can't be placed together in an adoptive home, the agency needs to obtain permission from DHS to separate them.

When siblings are separated, frequent visitation between them must occur unless it is documented to be contrary to their safety or well-being.

(Minnesota Statutes 260.012, <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/?id=260.012> .)

From the Attachments tab, print these documents to help you make decisions for siblings needing permanency:

- Foster and Adoptive Placement of Siblings and Visitation with Siblings
- When Siblings are Separated by Adoption: What Adoptive Parents Need to Know
- Sibling Placement, Separation, and Visitation Policies and Procedures
- Sibling Decision Making Matrix

Bring these documents to your next classroom training.

Non-Resident Parents

When a child who resides with one parent must enter out-of-home care, the first choice is to move the child to the non-resident (non-custodial) parent's home, if they are willing and able to care for the child. This is *not* considered a placement for the child.

As with all cases when a child is removed from the home, the agency is responsible to work a reunification plan with the parent who had the prior right to custody while providing concurrent permanency planning.

In these cases, use the Out-of-Home Placement Plan (introduced later in this chapter) to provide services, assess progress, and track timelines.

Relative Search

If neither parent is able to provide care, a diligent search for suitable relatives must occur prior to placement or within 30 days after the child's removal. (Minnesota Statutes 260C.212, Subdivision 5, <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/?id=260C.212> .)

Relative is "a person related to the child by blood, marriage, or adoption, or an individual who is an important friend with whom the child has resided or had significant contact." (Minnesota Statutes 260C.212, <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/?id=260C.212> .)

For an American Indian child, relative includes members of the extended family as defined by the law or custom of the child's tribe.

A relative search shall be reasonable and comprehensive in scope and may last up to six months or until a fit and willing relative is identified. The search can extend beyond 6 months if it is in the child's best interests or ordered by the court. The search is to include both maternal relatives, and paternal relatives if paternity is adjudicated. (Refer to statute for complete detail.)

Refer to the Module 7 attachment Checklist for Locating and Contacting Non-Resident Parents to help you identify and search for relatives, and document your efforts. Remember to use genograms and eco-maps as resources.

Follow these links to resources about relative searches:

- *DHS Relative Search Best Practice Guide.*
<http://www.childfocuspartners.com/relativesearch/MNBestPracticesGuide.pdf>
- *Making "Relative Search" Happen*
<http://www.childfocuspartners.com/images/RelativeSearchGuide10-15.pdf>
- *Assessing Adult Relatives as Preferred Caregivers in Permanency Planning: A Competency-Based Curriculum.*
<http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/socwork/nrcfcpp/downloads/assessing-adult-relatives-as-preferred-caregivers.pdf>

Relative Licensing

To provide foster care, relatives must be licensed as foster care providers.

In an *emergency* situation, the child may be immediately placed with a relative who does not hold a license after assuring that the home is safe for the child by completing a criminal or child/adult maltreatment history through a release of information. (Minnesota Statutes 245A.035, <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/?id=245A.035> .)

The agency must visit the relative's home prior to or within three days of the placement to ensure the child's health and safety and to provide a child foster home license application.

Consult with tribal contacts to learn processes for placing American Indian children in non-licensed relative homes on an emergency basis.

When a child is placed with an unlicensed relative or kin, the relative must begin the licensing process by completing the child foster care application within 10 calendar days. If the licensing process is not completed and the agency cannot verify the child's safety, the agency must remove the child from the relative's home.

Talk with a licensing worker in your agency about the relative licensing process.

Notice to Adult Relatives

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Prior to placement, or within 30 days after a child has been placed, you must provide notice to adult relatives that explains:

- The child's need for a foster home
- The option to become a placement resource
- The possible need for a permanent placement
- The responsibility to keep the agency informed of their current address
- How relatives may participate in care and planning for the child
- Family foster care licensing requirements
- Available supports for relatives and children who reside in a family foster home.

(These standards are consistent with federal law, *Fostering Connections for Success and Increasing Adoption Act* and Minnesota Statutes 260C.212, Subdivision 5.)

Other Roles for Relatives

If relatives cannot be a placement resource but want to assist in reunification efforts, they may:

- Provide respite care
- Drive the parents and child to appointments
- Help with visitation
- Request visitation with the child
- Attend court hearings
- Go to the child's activities, such as concerts and sporting events
- Include the child in family celebrations
- Offer family cultural, social or medical information
- Help the youth with independent living plan tasks.

Follow the link to *New Help for Children Raised by Grandparents and Other Relatives: Questions and Answers About the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008*. <http://www.childrendefense.org/child-research-data-publications/data/new-help-for-children-raised-by-grandparents-other-relatives.html>

Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children – ICPC

You may find a potential placement for a child in another state.

The Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children – ICPC – ensures that when a child is to be placed in another state:

- The receiving state has an opportunity to assess the proposed placement
- The sending state has obtained enough information to evaluate the proposed placement
- The placement is suitable for the child
- The child's care is promoted through appropriate jurisdictional arrangement and financial support.

Follow the link to Minnesota's ICPC website.

http://www.dhs.state.mn.us/main/idcplg?IdcService=GET_DYNAMIC_CONVERSION&RevisionSelectionMethod=LatestReleased&dDocName=id_000157#

(Interstate compact agreements stem from the 2006 Safe and Timely Interstate Placement of

Foster Children Act and Minnesota Statutes 260.851, 260.93.)

Preparation for Placement

Whenever possible, consider pre-placement visits for children, families and resource families.

Thorough placement planning can:

- Reduce the likelihood that a move to kinship or foster care will precipitate excessive trauma for the child and family
- Reduce long-term negative consequences of separation and placement.

In best practice, the pre-placement visit happens when all resource family members are home and may include a meal or overnight stay. This should follow with a chance to say good-bye to the family the child is leaving. Pre-placement visits may include more than one visit and may include the birth parent.

Emergency Placement Strategies

When emergencies make a pre-placement visit impossible, you need some strategies to help the child understand what is happening and where he or she is going. Let's take a brief look at two possible approaches to help children move through the stress of placement.

One strategy is to ask your agency's resource families to make a scrapbook that includes pictures of themselves, pets, schools, child's room, and favorite recreational activities. Keep this book available for workers to share with the child before going to the resource family home.

Another strategy is to introduce the child to the resource family and then go for a walk or a drive with the child to talk about first impressions and possible concerns. Make sure all of the child's belongings remain in your vehicle; this communicates that what he or she has to say is important.

Ask the child questions like these:

- What did you like?
- What didn't you like?
- What made you feel safe?
- Did anything make you feel afraid? What was it?
- Do you understand the family rules?
- What questions do you have?
- What would you like to ask the family now?
- What would you like to tell the new family about yourself?

Return to the family and share this information. Move the child's belongings into the home after questions and concerns have been addressed.

Talk with your colleagues and supervisor to learn other strategies that might help children when they enter placement.

Assisting with Adjustment

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Adequate placement preparation alleviates many anxieties and greatly reduces stress by providing information.

Before the child goes to school for the first time following placement, help her practice truthful responses to questions from teachers, neighbors and classmates about why she is in care:

- “It’s private and I don’t want to talk about it.”
- “My mom needs some help so I am staying here for a while.”

These answers are appropriately vague for people who really don’t need to know all the details about what is happening in the child’s world.

From the Attachments tab, print and share these resources with birth and foster families:

- *Child Placement Preparation Strategies.*
- *Child Reactions to Loss: Common Behavior Patterns of the Grieving Process.*

Preparing the Parent

Consider these strategies to prepare parents:

- Respectfully and openly discuss the reasons for removal and placement.
- Acknowledge parental anger and grief
- Be clear about the goal to reunify as soon as the agency is assured of child safety.
- When parents understand and accept the reasons for placement, encourage them to help explain the placement to the child.
- Ask parents to provide in-depth information to help the resource family maintain continuity (for example, schedule, routines, likes and dislikes, strengths and needs).
- Engage the parent in all aspects of the planning and placement process.
- Inform parents of the importance of permanency. Explain that the agency will do everything possible to help the parent so the child can return home.
- When appropriate, allow parents to recommend homes where the child can be placed.
- Explain the court process and child protection procedures.
- Develop and discuss a visitation plan; don’t forget to include visits with siblings.

Preparing Resource Families

Provide the resource family with substantial information on the child and family. Think about what you would want to know if you were asked to provide care to a child who needed a safe place to live.

Prior to placement, resource families need to know:

- Worker and agency contact information, including emergency contacts
- Identifying information about the child and birth family
- Abuse and neglect history
- Behaviors and attachment concerns
- Educational and medical information
- Visitation information
- Contact information for other professionals working with the child

- Potential for child and parental violence against the resource family
- Child history of making allegations against caregivers.

Don't downplay the importance of this information or make a choice to withhold vital information; doing so can negatively influence the experiences of the child and family.

Out of Home Placement Plan – OHPP

The Out-of-Home Placement Plan (OHPP) is the case plan for children in placement; it is the basis of your work with the child, family and resource family. The type and details of the OHPP vary depending on the placement reason. Visit the statute to learn the OHPP legal requirements. (Minnesota Statutes 260C.212, Subdivision 1, <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/?id=260C.212>)

In contrast to the Family Assessment and CPS plans for children remaining in the home, the OHPP includes tasks for foster parents and an independent living plan for youth 16 years and older who are in care.

Note that when some children remain in the home and receive child protective services and other children from that home are in placement, you need to complete both the CPS plan and the OHPP.

The OHPP must be completed:

- Within 30 days of placement
- Jointly with the parents
- Jointly with the child, when appropriate
- In consultation with the guardian *ad litem*, foster parent, and tribe if the child is Indian.

The OHPP must identify services to be provided based on each child's unique and individual needs. Appropriate services are crucial to placement stability.

Submit the OHPP to the court for approval within 30 days of filing a CHIPS petition or a petition to review a voluntary placement. Provide copies of the plan to all appropriate parties. Follow the statute link for more details. (Minnesota Statutes 260C.178, Subdivision 7, <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/?id=260C.178>)

OHPP Components

Family Visitation

Visits between parents and children, and siblings, are a good predictor of successful reunification.

Agencies are required to develop and implement a plan for parental visitation as soon as possible after the child is placed. The agency is also required to provide frequent visitation and contact with siblings if they are not placed together.

The primary purposes of visitation are to maintain parent-child attachment, reduce the child's sense of abandonment, and preserve a sense of belonging.

From the Attachments tab, print *The Importance of Visits Between Parents and Their Children in Care*.

(Minnesota Statutes 260C.178, Subdivision 3, <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/?id=260C.178> , and Minnesota Statutes 260C.212, Subdivision 1, <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/?id=260C.212> .)

A critical decision for everyone is whether visits should be supervised or unsupervised. Consider supervised visits when there is a specific child safety threat. Threats may include:

- Potential physical or emotional abuse during the visit
- Parental behavior that may be inappropriate or unpredictable
- The child is afraid to be alone with the parent.

The visitation supervisor may be the primary case worker, resource family, paraprofessionals, other community partners, a non-offending family member or a family friend. Supervised visits can be a time for the parent to learn appropriate parenting skills through mentoring and skill modeling.

Health

Federal and state laws require the OHPP to include efforts to ensure the oversight and continuity of health care services to the child. The OHPP must include:

- A plan to schedule initial health screens and follow up care.
- A designation of who is responsible to coordinate and respond to the child's health care needs
- Health records of the child, including contact information for medical providers, immunizations, medications, known medical problems, and information needed for medical insurance or medical assistance.

Education

Agencies are required to ensure that educational needs of children in care are met. This means making efforts to keep the child in the school where he was enrolled prior to care. If remaining in the same school is not possible, enroll the child in a new school immediately to ensure educational stability.

Educational records in the OHPP include:

- The names and addresses of educational providers
- The child's school records (grades, attendance, IEP, etc.)
- Any other relevant education information.

(The Fostering Connections Act and Minnesota Statutes 260C.212, Subdivisions 1(c), 7, and 8.)

Independent Living Plan

The Independent Living Plan (ILP) must be completed for children age 16 and older who are in placement as a result of a permanency determination. The ILP must include, at minimum:

- Educational, vocational, or employment planning
- Health care planning and medical coverage
- Transportation, including, when appropriate, assisting the child in obtaining a driver's license
- Money management
- Planning for housing
- Social and recreational skills
- Establishing and maintaining connections with the child's family and community.

Resource parents can introduce much of the primary knowledge in this area and discuss the need for further training and services with the case worker and child.

Review of the OHPP

Each OHPP must be reviewed by the court every 90 days.

In cases where the court does not conduct the review, the agency holds an administrative review no longer than 180 days after the initial placement and again at least every 180 days that the child remains in care. Talk with your supervisor about your agency's use of court and administrative reviews.

For children age 16 and older who are in placement following a permanency disposition, the court also reviews the Independent Living Plan and the provision of services as the child prepares to leave foster care.

For certain children past the age of 18, the agency must show that it gave notice to the child regarding the right to continue to access services, including foster care until age 21.

Placement Stability

Placement stability refers to whether, and how often, a child changes placement.

Decreasing placement disruptions should be a high priority in order to:

- Minimize child stress, emotional pain, and trauma
 - Decrease attachment issues and emotional behavior disorders
 - Increase the likelihood that a child will establish positive relationships.
 - Minimize school mobility and increase academic achievement
 - Maximize continuity in services
 - Decrease foster parent stress
 - Lower program costs.
- Pecora (in CW360, Spring 2010)

Follow this link for an additional resource about placement stability. (CW360: *Promoting Placement Stability*)

http://www.cehd.umn.edu/SSW/cascw/attributes/PDF/publications/CW360_2010.pdf

Some moves are necessary to meet the child's needs and achieve permanency. Placement changes can occur for many reasons:

- Provider request
- Child's behavior problems
- Law violations
- Lack of placement resources
- Foster parent limitations
- Issues between agency and resource family – assessment, matching and support services
- Maltreatment by the resource family.

Strategies to minimize placement disruption include:

- Services to the child *and* birth family – including frequent case worker visits
- Appropriate recruitment, assessment, training, matching and support of resource families to meet each child's unique needs
- Providing resource families sufficient information to make an informed decision
- Refraining from pressuring resource families to take a child when they are not able to
- Communicating clearly the content of the OHPP, including the responsibilities of the parent, child, resource family, worker and agency
- Applying lessons learned from past disruptions.

Whole family foster care – placing the whole family with a resource family – is another way to keep children with their families, and to avoid placement disruption. Talk with your supervisor to learn if this service is available through your agency.

Safety in Placement

An issue in placement stability that merits attention is child maltreatment in the placement home.

Agencies have a responsibility to keep a child safe from harm in the out-of-home setting. That responsibility requires a higher standard of safety than required in the child's own home. Discuss reports of maltreatment in out-of-home care with your supervisor to determine the agency's next steps. Be sure to coordinate the investigation with the licensing worker or agency.

To minimize the possibility of an unsafe placement, consider:

- What is going on in the resource family's home
- Other children in the home who may be affected by or may affect the child
- Any life-changing events that have occurred or are pending
- Behavioral characteristics of the resource parents and their families
- Appropriate matching of resources to identified needs.

Continue to ensure safety by:

- Creating a safety plan when necessary
- Meeting face-to-face and privately with the child during visits
- Conducting planned and unplanned visits to the resource home.

Relationships: Parents and Resource Families

Part of the case worker's role is to encourage a positive relationship between parents and resource families.

From the Attachments tab, print the Resource Families Worksheet. Take a few minutes to jot down your thoughts and ideas for each topic area. File the worksheet behind the Classroom Activities tab in your binder; be prepared to engage in discussion when you attend your next classroom training.

Services for Parents

Just as children experience grief and loss with placement, so do parents. Recognize and validate emotions, including

- Depression
- Anger
- Ambivalence
- Relief
- Uninvolvement.

Engage parents in problem-solving by empowering and involving them to work the case plan, make decisions, and take actions that lead to healthy change.

Worker Visits

Worker visits with children, parents and resource families are vital services. Visit frequency and quality is critical to providing support and monitoring OHPP progress.

Federal law requires *monthly* face-to-face visits with every child in foster care or on a trial home visit. If a case is co-managed by a tribal worker and county worker, visits from both workers count towards the monthly visit.

If parents are not living together, plan for separate visits with each parent.

Visits are the foundation for effectively engaging the family in case planning and decision making. Clear communication and information sharing is essential to strong parent-worker alliances and achieving positive outcomes.

The substance and length of visits needs to be sufficient to:

- Assess child safety
- Address plan progress
- Identify and resolve service concerns

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- Modify objectives and tasks when needed.

Plan for each visit by outlining topics for discussion, deciding what information you need to assess progress, and identifying areas for additional support.

Plan sufficient time to meet with the child alone. This is essential to accurate assessment of safety and case plan progress.

For additional information, follow the link to *Visitation with Infants and Toddlers in Foster Care: What Judges and Attorneys Need to Know*.

http://www.ct.gov/ccpa/lib/ccpa/birth_to_three_and_visitation_aba_child_law_center_doc.pdf

Quality worker visits:

- Continuously assess safety and well-being
- Focus on the case plan
- Take place in the foster home
- Include individual, meaningful dialogue with the child, resource family and parents
- Allow for decision making by the parents and child when appropriate
- Are supportive and skill-building
- Are carefully documented.

(Adapted from the National Conference of State Legislatures, 2006.)

Practice Behaviors for Worker Visits

It is important to evaluate each visit for quality. Ask yourself whether you successfully gathered the information needed. Then determine what you will do as follow-up or include in the next visit.

From the Attachments tab, print and read *Practice Notes for North Carolina's Child Welfare Workers*, much of which is applies to practice in Minnesota.

Think about your own practice behaviors:

- Do you assess your visits with children and families?
- Do you consult with your supervisor or colleagues?
- How do you identify what you did well?
- How do you identify areas for improvement?
- What changes can you make?

Consult with your supervisor for ways to improve visits.

Concurrent Permanency Planning - CPP

Reunification is the preferred permanency option. Concurrent Permanency Planning (CPP) is a process for children in foster care, whereby family reunification is pursued at the same time alternative permanency goals are considered and developed.

By moving concurrently rather than sequentially, temporary foster care placements can be shortened and children and youth can thrive in safe, stable permanent families.

Permanency planning is on-going throughout the life of the case.

The primary goals of CPP are to:

- Support safety and well-being of children and families
- Provide early and timely permanency
- Decrease the length of stay in foster care
- Reduce the number of moves and relationship disruptions.

Two plans run simultaneously. Plan A is always reunification with the birth family. Plan B is Adoption or Guardianship with Kin.

The Concurrent Permanency Plan must be determined within the first 60 days of placement. Relative and non-relative placement options need to be included in the plan.

When providing permanency and CPP services, help birth and resource families partner, collaborate and engage to meet the child's needs.

(Minnesota Statutes 260C.213, <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/?id=260C.213> .)

Follow these links for additional resources:

- Reaching Out: Current Issues for Child Welfare Practice in Rural Communities – Concurrent Planning-Existing Challenges and New Possibilities
- http://humanservices.ucdavis.edu/news/pdf/091_252_ro.pdf
- Concurrent Planning Teleconference (June 2, 2010)
<http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/socwork/nrcfcpp/teleconferences/6-2-10/Concurrent%20Planning%20Overview.pdf>
- DHS Practice Guide for Concurrent Permanency Planning .
http://www.mncourts.gov/documents/0/Public/Children's_Justice_Initiative/Ch_31_-_Concurrent_Permanency_Planning_-_Appendix_A.pdf

When a Child Leaves Foster Care

Before a child is discharged from foster care, the court shall ensure that the agency, in conjunction with the placement provider, assists the child age 16 or older in obtaining the following documents:

- Social Security card
- Birth certificate, state identification card or driver's license, green card or school visa
- School, medical and dental records, and a contact list of service providers
- Sibling contact information if the siblings are in foster care.

(Minnesota Statutes 260C.212, Subdivision 7.)

Whether under state guardianship or not, if a child leaves foster care by reason of having attained the age of majority under state law, the child must be given at no cost a copy of the child's social and medical history, as defined in section [259.43](#), and education report.

(Minnesota Statutes 260C.212, Subdivision 4 (e).

<https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/?id=260C.212>)

Age Limits for Foster Care

Federal and state law allows youth in foster care under 260C or 260D to remain in foster care until age 21. Within six months of the youth becoming 18 years of age, agencies must inform the youth, their parent or legal guardian, and foster parents of the availability of continued foster care benefits up to age 21.

If the youth does not want to remain in extended foster care, a Transition Plan must be developed. Counties can meet this requirement by updating the ILP.

(Minnesota Statutes 260C.451, Subdivision 1,

<https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/?id=260C.451>)

Foster Care Benefits Beyond Age 18

Youth who do not return home or achieve another permanency option must meet at least one of the following conditions on an on-going basis in order to receive foster care benefits beyond age 18:

- Completing secondary education or a program leading to an equivalent credential
- Enrolled in postsecondary or vocational education
- Participating in a program designed to promote or remove barriers to employment
- Employed for at least 80 hours per month
- Incapable of doing these activities due to a medical condition.

Placement Reviews

Administrative or court placement reviews must be held every 12 months to determine whether reasonable efforts are being taken to:

- Ensure that foster care is the best legal arrangement or whether there is another option that would better meet the youth's needs
- Assist in building life-long relationships with family, siblings, and other caring supportive individuals
- Plan with the youth to utilize supports and services that develop appropriate skills for independence.

Transition Plan

The county must provide youth age 18 or older with a personal Transition Plan within 90 days of the expected date of discharge from foster care.

This plan must be as detailed as the youth wants and must include options on housing, health insurance, education, workforce supports, employment services and local opportunities for mentors and continuing support services.

Returning to Care After Age 18: VPA

If a youth returns to care after age 18, a special voluntary placement agreement (VPA) must be completed and signed to legalize the placement. In these situations, the court must review the placement within 180 days of the VPA and every 12 months as long as the youth is in care.

State wards must be allowed to return to foster care; others' request to return to care depends on the availability of county funding.

For more information follow the link to DHS Bulletin 10-68-12 *Fostering Connections Guidance and Changes to Foster Care for Youth Ages 18-21*.

http://www.dhs.state.mn.us/main/idcplg?IdcService=GET_FILE&RevisionSelectionMethod=LatestReleased&Rendition=Primary&allowInterrupt=1&noSaveAs=1&dDocName=dhs16_151788

Support for Older Youth

To assist youth with learning and accessing specialized services, agencies can access and provide funding through the federal Support for Emancipation and Living Functionally (SELF) program.

Federal funding for post-secondary education for youth ages 18-21 who have been in out-of-home care can be accessed through Education and Training Vouchers (ETVs) obtained from the Minnesota Department of Human Services.

http://www.dhs.state.mn.us/main/idcplg?IdcService=GET_DYNAMIC_CONVERSION&dDocName=id_000553&RevisionSelectionMethod=LatestReleased

The Forgotten Children's Fund provides up to a one time maximum reimbursement of \$300 per youth for youth in out-of-home placement. This fund helps foster families purchase items beyond the necessities, such as driver's education and high school graduation expenses.

http://www.dhs.state.mn.us/main/groups/children/documents/pub/dhs16_139938.pdf

To assist you with practice issues in working with older youth transitioning from foster care, print these documents from the Attachments tab:

- *Helping Youth Transition from Out-of-Home Placement to Adulthood Best Practices Guide*
- *Youth Transitioning Out of Foster Care Timeline*.

Follow the link to another helpful resource. (*CW360: Permanency or Aging Out: Adolescents in the Child Welfare System*.)

http://www.cehd.umn.edu/ssw/cascw/attributes/PDF/publications/CW360_2009.pdf

Special Immigrant Juvenile Status – SIJS

Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS) is granted for purposes of obtaining immigration relief for a child (anyone under age 21 and unmarried) from abuse, neglect or abandonment. To qualify, a child must be under the jurisdiction of juvenile court as a result of maltreatment or

abandonment, cannot be reunited with a parent, and for whom return to their country of nationality is not in their best interest.

SIJS allows a child to remain in the United States, obtain lawful permanent residency, and receive a government-issued photo identification card and employment authorization. Undocumented children who emancipate from foster care without SIJS risk being deported and cannot access employment or government services.

As a worker serving diverse populations, you must be aware of the SIJS requirements and arrange access to immigration services for youth, particularly when preparing for emancipation from foster care and prior to aging out of foster care. Remember to secure and use language interpretation services where appropriate.

Follow the link to DHS Bulletin 10-68-06 *Special Immigrant Juvenile Status*.
http://www.dhs.state.mn.us/main/groups/publications/documents/pub/dhs16_149979.pdf

Summary

While we know that children thrive best in their families, there are instances when parents can't safely care for their children, resulting in children placement. Relatives and kin should be sought first to provide care because preserving relationships with family members is crucial to child safety, permanency and well-being.

When a child enters placement, services that focus on and support reunification need to be provided. Other services are directed at making the placement transition as trauma-free as possible, supporting all involved to promote placement stability, and making sure the child's needs are being met.

Next Steps

From the Attachments tab, locate and print the chapter transcript. File it behind the Module 12 Transcript tab.

File the Resource Families Worksheet behind the Classroom Activities tab.

If you have not already done so, print and file these documents behind the Policy Federal/State tab:

- Timing of Judicial Events for Voluntary Out-of-Home Placement When the Child is NOT Placed Under Minnesota Statutes 260D Fathers and Their Rights in Minnesota
- Administrative and Judicial Events for a Child in Voluntary Foster Care for Treatment under Minnesota Statutes 260D
- Helping Youth Transition from Out-of-Home Placement to Adulthood Best Practices Guide
- Youth Transitioning Out of Foster Care Timeline.

File these documents behind the Module 12 Resources tab:

CWTS
CWFT Module 12 Chapter 2
Printable Transcript

- Placement Decisions - resources
- Foster and Adoptive Placement of Siblings and Visitation with Siblings
- When Siblings are Separated by Adoption: What Adoptive Parents Need to Know
- Sibling Placement, Separation, and Visitation Policies and Procedures
- Sibling Decision Making Matrix
- Protective Capacity of Kinship Caregiver
- Child Placement Preparation Strategies.
- Child Reactions to Loss: Common Behavior Patterns of the Grieving Process.
- The Importance of Visits Between Parents and Their Children in Care
- Practice Notes for North Carolina's Child Welfare Workers.

Consult with your supervisor about:

- The frequency of 260C and 260D placements and types of services provided
- Your agency's placement process
- Your agency's licensing process
- Strategies to help children when they enter placement
- Your agency's use of court and administrative OHPP reviews
- Whether whole family foster care is available
- Ways to improve family visits.

When you are ready, begin Chapter 3.