



# Integrating Concurrent Planning into Child Welfare Practice

The Pennsylvania Child Welfare Training Program  
University of Pittsburgh, School of Social Work

# Learning Objectives

Upon completion of the training participants will be able to:

- Recognize the child welfare practices and laws that helped to shape current applications of Concurrent Planning.
- Explain the principles of Concurrent Planning.
- Explain and apply the Concurrent Planning Three-Stage Casework Practice Model and its timeline.
- Identify the elements of a successful full disclosure interview.
- Identify steps in their own transfer of learning plan.

# Agenda

- Introduction
- Knowledge Review
  - Historical Perspective
  - Practice Principles
  - Legal Mandates
- Tuning in to Others: The Impact of Sequential Planning on Children
- Planning for Permanency: A Three-Stage Process
- Collaborative Communications & The Full Disclosure Interview
- Three-Stage Case Planning Skills Practice
- Full Disclosure Interview Skills Practice
- Transfer of Learning & Evaluation




# Concurrent Planning

**To work toward family reunification  
while,  
at the same time,  
developing an alternative permanent  
plan.**

# Key Points

- Developed as an alternative to sequential planning, concurrent planning is both a philosophy and a case management method.
- Foster care outcomes are determined as much by an agency's approach as by the parental situation.
- Concurrent planning utilizes a child-focused, family-centered approach that involves the parents in the decision making process. Parents are given candid feedback about their progress throughout the process.

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- Concurrent planning relies on accurate and thorough assessments and culturally sensitive interviewing.
  - Permanent placements are used whenever possible to remove the anxiety about the future from the child and onto the adults.
  - Concurrent planning helps to remove the adversarial relationships between the adults (parents, relatives, former foster families) by developing supportive relationships that are meant to continue after permanency is achieved. Legal timeframes are used as a means to support parental engagement in the service plan.

# Concurrent Planning Knowledge Review

- Questions will be displayed
- As a table group you have 1 minute to select the correct answer
- Select a person to write the group answer on a blank sheet of paper
- Select a person to keep a total of your correct answers

# Questions # 1

- Although The Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act (PL 96-272 1980) helped to reduce the number of children in foster care, timely permanency still remained a issue.
  - True
  - False

# Answer # 1 - True

- In 1959, Maas and Engler published research that showed children were languishing in foster care and coined the term “foster care drift”.
- Foster care was viewed as a means to rescue children from inadequate or dangerous families.
- Children were placed with temporary foster parents.
- Permanency was not an active consideration.
- Traditionally case management had consisted of:
  - Introduction of a new permanency goal after several years of providing services to achieve reunification.
  - Long-term foster care was a permanency option

## **The Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act of 1980 (PL 96-272) was passed and required:**

- Reasonable efforts to prevent unnecessary placements.
- Least restrictive placements within culture and community.
- Written case plans.
- Timely case reviews.
- Dispositional hearings no later than 18 months after placement.

# Questions # 2

- The Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997 (PL 105-89) (ASFA) was passed by Congress to address permanency outcomes and safety.
  - True
  - False

# Answer # 2 – True

## ASFA focuses on child:

- Safety: Safe from Abuse/Neglect
- Well-being: Physical Health, Mental Health, Education and Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs.
- Permanency: Create timely, legal permanency for dependent children via:
  - Reunification
  - Adoption
  - Permanent Legal Custodianship

# Questions # 3

- This law states that permanency planning for children must begin as soon as the child enters substitute care. From the time a child enters placement, the county agency must be diligent in finding a permanent family for the child:
  - a. Indian Child Welfare Act
  - b. Adoption and Safe Families Act
  - c. Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act of 1980
  - d. Multiethnic Placement Act/Interethnic Placement Act

# Answer # 3

a. Indian Child Welfare Act

**b. Adoption and Safe Families Act**

c. Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act of 1980

d. Multiethnic Placement Act/Interethnic Placement Act

# Question # 4

- ASFA includes:
  - a. Permanency hearings 12 months following placement.
  - b. Aggravated circumstances which define when reunification efforts are not necessary.
  - c. Acknowledgement that concurrent planning is best practice.
  - d. All of the above

# Answer # 4

- a. Permanency hearings 12 months following placement.
- b. Aggravated circumstances, which define when reunification efforts are not necessary.
- c. Acknowledgement that concurrent planning is best practice.
- d. All of the above**

# Question # 5

When applying the principles of concurrent planning success is defined as:

- A. Reunification
- B. Adoption
- C. Timely permanency with family reunification as the first but not the only option

# Answer # 5

C. Timely permanency with family reunification as the first but not the only option

- Timely PERMANENCY for the child is the GOAL
- While providing services to work towards reunification (reasonable efforts), you may concurrently provide services to work towards an alternative permanency plan

# Question # 6

To successfully plan concurrently you need to:

- a. Conduct early and ongoing assessments
- b. Closely monitor progress toward family service plan goals
- c. Provide detailed and honest feedback to all parties involved
- d. Conduct intensive searches and child matches
- e. All of the above

# Answer # 6

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**e. All of the above**

# Question # 7

Concurrent Planning sabotages reunification efforts:

- a. True
- b. False

# Answer # 7

FALSE

Concurrent Planning DOES NOT sabotage reunification efforts:

- It provides parents with clear responsibilities and consequences
- Keeps all parties informed
- Encourages early intensive assessments and reunification efforts
- Encourages collaborative planning with ALL involved parties

# Questions # 8

Key aspects of concurrent planning are:

- a. Frequent and consistent visitation
- b. Detailed documentation of agency reasonable efforts
- c. Not telling the foster/kinship parents about the possible need for long-term placement of the child
- d. A and B
- e. Not encouraging alternative caregivers and bio-parents to work together

# Answer # 8

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- b. Detailed documentation of agency reasonable efforts**
- c. Not telling the foster/kinship parents about the possible need for long-term placement of the child
- d. A and B**
- e. Not encouraging alternative caregivers and bio-parents to work together

# Question # 9

Concurrent planning focuses on:

- a. The behavior of the parent, not promises
- b. Timely permanency for the child
- c. Early intensive assessments and planning
- d. Full disclosure interviews with ALL involved parties
- e. All of the above

# Answer # 9

## Concurrent planning focuses on:

- a. The behavior of the parent, not promises

ASFA limits the amount of time parents have to change their behavior and reunify with their children.

It is critical that child welfare professionals and the legal system focus on parental behavior and their ability to insure child safety, permanency and well-being, not their promises to do so.

- b. Timely permanency for the child
- c. Early intensive assessments and planning
- d. Full disclosure interviews with ALL involved parties
- e. **All of the above**

# Question # 10

Detailed written agreements are a key aspect of concurrent planning?

- a. True
- b. False

# Answer # 10 - True

Detailed written agreements – ARE a key aspect of concurrent planning

- Family Service Plans (FSP) objectives must focus on behavior changes not activities**
- FSP must be active contracts between the agency and the parents**
- FSP tasks list must be reviewed and updated monthly**

# Question # 11

- **According to the Indian Child Welfare Act, when working with an Indian child only your plan A must have approval from the child's tribe?**
  - True**
  - False**

# Answer # 11 – FALSE

- Public Law 95-608 was established to:
  - Protect the best interest of Indian children
  - Promote stability and security of Indian tribes and families
  - Create standards for removal of Indian children from their families
  - Set standards that placement will reflect the unique value of Indian culture
  - Defined Indian child as any unmarried person who is under the age of eighteen and is either (a) a member of an Indian tribe or (b) is eligible for membership in an Indian tribe and is the biological child of a member of an Indian tribe.

# ICWA

- In an adoptive placement of an Indian child under State law, a preference shall be given, in the absence of good cause to the contrary, to a placement with:
  - (1) a member of the child's extended family;
  - (2) other members of the Indian child's tribe; or
  - (3) other Indian families.

# ICWA

- In any foster or preadoptive placement of an Indian child, a preference shall be given, in the absence of good cause to the contrary, to a placement with:
  - (1) a member of the Indian child's extended family;
  - (2) a foster home licensed, approved, or specified by the Indian child's tribe;
  - (3) an Indian foster home licensed or approved by an authorized non-Indian licensing authority; or
  - (4) an institution for children approved by an Indian tribe or operated by an Indian organization which has a program suitable to meet the Indian child's needs.

# Question # 12

To achieve child permanency it is critical that extensive efforts are made to:

- a. Develop legally sound case plans
- b. Provide concise court reports
- c. Delivery of competent testimony that focuses parental progress, and child development needs
- d. All of the above

# Answer # 12 - All of the above

To achieve child permanency it is critical that extensive efforts are made to:

- Develop legally sound case plans that provide timely reasonable efforts and clear objectives that focus on required behavior change that will insure child safety
  
- Provide concise court reports that clearly document:
  - Progress
  - Participation in the visitation plan
  - Recommendations
  - Child Permanency Plan
  
- Preparation for court including:
  - Gathering and documenting facts
  - Inviting all parties to participate
  - Collaboration with the child's attorney
  - Delivery of competent testimony that focuses on:
    - parental progress
    - child development needs

# Question # 13

Some of the benefits of Concurrent Planning to Birth Families are:

- a. Enhances birth parent motivation
- b. Allows the worker to keep sensitive information from the birth parent
- c. Provides meaningful contact and child visitation
- d. Involves family in identifying kinship options
- e. a, c, and d
- f. All of the above

# Answer # 13 – E

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# **CONCURRENT PLANNING**

## **A THREE-STAGE MODEL OF CASEWORK**

- **Stage One: Doing For (One to Four Months)**
- **Stage Two: Doing With (Five to Eight Months)**
  - 1<sup>st</sup> Permanency Hearing
- **Stage Three: Moving towards Independence (Eight to Twelve months)**
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> Permanency Hearing

# Stage One: Doing For (One to Four Months)

- Parent Capacity: Very low, in crisis, disorganized – experiencing traumatic loss and grief
- Parent-Worker Responsibility: Worker
- Secure and Manage Resources: Worker plans and gets resources
- Teach Problem-solving Skills: Worker describes while doing, elicits suggestions
- Resolve Internal Obstacles: Stabilize by providing basics and support
- Establish Support Network: Involve significant others as resource managers, if available

# Examples of Activities:

- Setting up care for children (Permanency Planning home, kinship support)
- Specific help, direction guidance
- Role model for making phone calls and setting up appointments
- Setting up transportation
- Frequent visits, phone calls
- Checking on progress
- Support managing money
- Supervised or teaching visits
- Role model re: community networking/resource allocation

# Stage Two: Doing With (Five to Eight Months)

- Parent Capacity: Moderate, client has basic skills – past traumatic loss stage as bond continues with children
- Parent-Worker Responsibility: Collaborative planning, Parent does task and worker offers feedback
- Secure and Manage Resources: Worker offers information, client gets resources
- Teach Problem-solving Skills: Worker prompts for steps, generalize skills to new situation
- Establish Support Network: parent request help from network, adds members

# Examples of Activities:

- Parent report progress to worker on a scheduled basis
- Parent sets up their own appointments
- Less frequent home visits, calls initiated by parent
- If relapse occurs, with the support of the worker, parent able to use supports to return to sobriety
- Parent begins to make requests for assistance rather than worker having to plan for needs
- Parent manages their money
- Increased visitation - more responsibility in caring for children (whether at home or in care)
- Unsupervised visits overnight visits

# Stage Three: Moving towards Independence (Eight to Twelve Months)

- Parent Capacity: Good decision-making and implementation skills – preparing to care for child(ren) full time
- Parent-Worker Responsibility: Parent
- Parent able to secure and manage resources
- Worker teaching problem-solving skills and helping parent plan for future
- Parent able to request help from network, add members

# Examples of Activities:

- Parent reports progress
- Parent increasing responsibility for child care (school, medical, decisions)
- Arranges support services for themselves – calls caseworker only after making efforts themselves
- If relapse occurs, parent able to use supports to immediately return to sobriety
- Parent shares parenting challenges with workers
- If child is not at home, extended, over-night visits occurring as frequently as possible

# CONCURRENT PLANNING

## FULL DISCLOSURE INTERVIEW

- Rights
- Responsibilities – private/public agency, parent, foster/kinship caregiver
- Expectations – parents and worker, options, consequences
- The effects of out of home placements on children.
- Foster care has an effect on children :
- You have choices and paths to choice, here are paths other parents have taken through the system. Generally, there are four.



# Parental Choices

Generally, there are four:

1. Parents can **work actively with the agency**
2. Parents can **withdraw**, disappear or only sporadically appear so that no service plan can really get going.
3. Parents can take an **adversarial stance** against all proposed services, visit schedules, evaluations, etc.
4. Finally, a parent can **relinquish permanent custody** of their child.