

Pennsylvania Practice Standard

Writing the Plan

STANDARD: The child welfare worker will write a service plan with the family, substitute caregivers, and other parties essential to the case, using clear language that addresses safety, risk, timeliness, and permanence. The plan will be family-specific and strengths-based with measurable objectives that are time limited. Tasks should specify who will do what, by when, and how.

Knowledge and value base (staff responsibilities):

- a. The child welfare worker must be able to engage the family in identifying family strengths, needs and resources.
- b. The child welfare worker must be able to write the service plan in a language the family understands.
- c. The child welfare worker must write the plan in a manner sensitive to the family's educational level.
- d. The child welfare worker must involve the family and stakeholders in developing and writing the service plan.
- e. The child welfare worker must be able to make clear to the family the consequences of not participating in the activities outlined or meeting the goals outlined in the service plan.
- f. The child welfare worker must know how to incorporate in the service plan information collected in the comprehensive assessment.
- g. The child welfare worker must know legal, regulatory, and policy requirements for child welfare that must be met by the service plan.
- h. The child welfare worker must know how to record in the service plan all activities performed on behalf of the child and family.
- i. The child welfare worker must be able to regularly update the incremental tasks on the plan to reflect progress, and update revisions to address barriers.
- j. The worker must know the difference between risk assessment as an indicator of future well-being and safety assessment as an ongoing indicator of harm. The worker must have the ability to evaluate the child's immediate safety.
- k. The child welfare worker must know how to write a concise summarized service plan which:
 1. Is time-limited and goal oriented
 2. Prioritizes needs as identified by the family, stakeholders, and the child welfare worker
 3. Includes reasonable, measurable, and observable objectives
 4. Includes realistic expectations of the family with consideration for the availability of resources, the level of family functioning, and legal mandates
 5. Clearly identifies and establishes responsibilities of all stakeholders.

Strategies:

- a. The child welfare worker will meet with all family members and stakeholders to develop the written plan.
- b. The child welfare worker will identify all stakeholders on the service plan.
- c. The child welfare worker will revise the plan whenever necessary so that newly negotiated tasks can be added.

- d. The child welfare worker will incorporate, in the written plan, the uniqueness and differences of the family with whom the plan is being written.
- e. The child welfare worker will adhere to the time frames mandated for writing and implementing the service plan.
- f. The child welfare supervisor will review and oversee the development and writing process, including guidance on collaboration and the development of specific goals, objectives, and time oriented tasks.
- g. The child welfare supervisor will review the service plan to ensure the language used is clear, appropriate, and precise.
- h. The child welfare supervisor will ensure that the child welfare worker has received training related to writing service plans.
- i. The child welfare worker will use supervision, training, or independent learning activities to develop skill to perform a risk assessment and child safety assessment.
- j. The child welfare worker will develop a collaborative relationship with the family using culturally sensitive strategies to promote trust and confidence that supports the family in service plan development.