

CHILDREN'S LEGAL SERVICES'
"TRANSITION-PLANNING GUIDE"

WHY US? It is our duty to ensure children change homes in a thoughtful and healthy way.

WHEN? From the time a child comes into care until their case is closed.

HOW? Ask the right questions to the right people and advocate for thoughtful transitions in and out of court using all the information at hand.

Reunification contemplated from the start

Has there been regular, frequent contact between the child, siblings and parents beginning immediately after removal? (Visits, letters, email, calls, Skype)

Have the out-of-home caregivers had an opportunity, immediately after initial removal, to meet with the parents and discuss the child? (Phone contact at a minimum.)

Does the case plan contemplate specific steps, if successful, which will lead to a recommendation for less restricted visitation?

Are the out-of-home caregivers practicing co-parenting and are they encouraging reunification by nurturing the child's attachments to their parents?

Are steps being taken to engage and involve the parents in medical and educational decisions for the child?

Are the parents cooperating with the out-of-home caregivers and vice versa?

Are the visitations positive? If the answer is no: Is modification of the case plan necessary? Has there been an assessment of the parents' parenting skills completed by a therapeutic professional?

Is it time?

Has there been a gradual and orderly transition plan put in place that involves the parents, out-of-home caregivers, GAL, child's attorney, child, child's therapist, and parent's appropriate service providers?

What are the child's and child's therapist thoughts about the transition?

Is the child 5 years old or younger or is the child disabled? If yes: Has there been a "Reunification Staffing"?

Has the child successfully spent extended periods of time, including unsupervised overnight and weekend visits with the parents or prospective caregivers?

Is the input of the present out of home caregivers being considered? Note: Best Practice is for CLS to contact the out-of-home caregivers directly.

Is there a plan for the child to say goodbye to the out-of-home caregivers and other children and pets in the present home? Does the child have all their belongings?

Where will the change of physical custody take place? Who will transport the child to the new home?

Are there any upcoming events in the home that would suggest waiting for a day or two for placement change of the child?

What is the educational plan for the child? If the child has to transfer schools, can the placement change wait until school is out?

Are there any medical treatments, procedures or appointments for the child that requires education of or follow-up by the new caregiver?

Are services transitioning with the child?

Is there a plan for continued contact with the out-of-home caregivers after the placement change?

