



Tennessee Department of Children's Services

Protocol for Planned Permanent Living Arrangement

Supplemental to DCS Policy: 16.31 Permanency Planning for Youth in Department of Children's Service Custody

The goal of "**Planned Permanent Living Arrangement**" (PPLA) is directly related to a specific resource family/caregiver that is willing to make a long-term commitment to a youth in custody when Reunification, Adoption, Permanent Guardianship and Exit Custody to Relative or Kin are not viable permanency options. While PPLA is a "permanency" goal, it is only relevant when associated with a resource family/caregiver willing to make a commitment to the youth up to the age of majority, at a minimum, and preferably into adulthood; for example, making a commitment to being the family/caregiver with whom the young adult can spend significant holidays or come "home" to during school vacations and share major life milestones, such as: graduation, marriage or the birth of a child are celebrated.

If all other conditions for PPLA have been met and the resource family/caregiver will provide care until the age of eighteen (**18**), but is unable to make any commitments beyond that age, PPLA can be an appropriate goal. The Child and Family Team (CFT) must be convinced that this resource family/caregiver is the best option for the youth until the age of majority and the youth must express a desire to remain with that resource family/caregiver.

Research has clearly demonstrated that youth who age out of foster care without a long-term commitment from a caring adult have many more difficulties making the transition to adulthood. For this reason, the use of PPLA as a permanency goal is only to be used as a last resort and when a specific resource family/caregiver has made a clear commitment to care for that youth, at least until the age of eighteen (**18**) and hopefully, beyond.

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

The conditions under which PPLA can be identified as a sole or concurrent permanency goal for youth are when:

- a) **The Department has made reasonable and appropriate efforts to return the youth to their parent(s), to place the youth with appropriate family members or to place the youth for adoption and has been unable to do so;**
- b) **The person(s) to whom the Department proposes to assign permanent caregiver status has demonstrated a commitment to assuming long-term responsibility for the youth;**
- c) **The person(s) to whom the Department proposes to assign permanent caregiver status has been fully informed about the options of adoption and, if applicable, permanent guardianship, and expresses a reasoned judgment for not pursuing adoption or permanent guardianship;**

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- d) It is in the best interest of the youth to remain in the home of the proposed permanent caregiver rather than to be considered for adoption by another person(s);
- e) The Child and Family Team has carefully considered all of the permanency options for this youth and recommended PPLA as a sole or concurrent goal; and,
- f) The approval for a goal of PPLA has been requested and granted from the Commissioner/Designee in Central Office.

AGE LIMITATIONS AND CONSENT OF YOUTH

- a) PPLA should not be considered a permissible goal for any child under the age of sixteen **(16)**.
- b) Any youth, sixteen **(16)** years of age or older, after having been fully informed about the options of adoption and permanent guardianship, must consent to the use of PPLA as a sole or concurrent goal before it is presented to the courts or Central Office.

PERMANENCY PLANNING

Permanency plans with a goal of PPLA must include action steps designed to help the youth develop additional meaningful relationships and family-like connections with other adults. These are resources that may remain actively involved and supportive of the youth into and throughout adulthood. Strategies should include efforts to involve the youth in extra-curricular activities through which such relationships can naturally evolve. There should also be efforts to help the youth reconnect with significant adults from his or her past who may become valuable resources for the future.

Part of the approval process of the goal of PPLA, by the Commissioner/Designee, includes a review of current and previous permanency plans to ensure that the conditions for PPLA have been met – for example, there are clearly documented efforts to achieve other goals prior to this request; subsequent plans have been logically updated and represent a progression of efforts and the current plan reflects ongoing efforts to help the youth broaden his/her network of supportive adult relationships.

PERIODIC REVIEWS OF PPLA

- a) **Every six (6) months by the Child and Family Team**

The Child and Family Team must specifically review the continued appropriateness of the PPLA goal for the youth at least once every six (6) months to ensure the placement continues to meet the youth's needs, that efforts to develop other relationships are ongoing and that the goal is still the best option for the youth. This review should be documented on form [CS-0747, Child and Family Team Meeting Summary](#) and reflected in the case notes.

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b) Annually by the Commissioner/Designee

The goal can only be continued if the Commissioner/Designee concurs that the standards are still being met and that PPLA remains appropriate. This requires submitting another request, utilizing form, [CS-0681, Request for Permanency Goal of PPLA](#), to continue the goal and obtaining approval from the Commissioner/Designee and must also be accompanied by form [CS-0747, Child and Family Team Meeting Summary](#), documenting the team's involvement and the their recommendation to continue the goal of PPLA.

IN THE EVENT OF PLACEMENT DISRUPTION

Because PPLA is directly related to a specific resource family/caregiver, who has made a commitment to the youth, whenever there is a disruption from that home and the youth is no longer living with that caregiver, the goal cannot continue to be PPLA, unless:

- a) The Child and Family Team reviews the goal and makes a new determination, based on the new circumstances, that PPLA continues to be an appropriate goal;
- b) All of the requirements for PPLA have been met (i.e., there is a resource family/caregiver willing to make a comparable long-term commitment to that youth); and,
- c) The Family Service Worker (FSW) submits another request to obtain the approval of the Commissioner/Designee, utilizing forms [CS-0681](#) and [CS-0747](#).

PROCEDURES FOR REQUESTING APPROVAL OF PPLA

1. The Child and Family Team must:

- a) Meet to discuss the goal of PPLA and provide documentation on form [CS-0747, Child and Family Team Meeting Summary](#);
- b) Review the standards and requirements for approval of PPLA;
- c) Assess the commitment from the resource family/caregiver(s);
- d) Explore the desires of the youth;
- e) Make a recommendation for the goal; and,
- f) Discuss, complete and sign form [CS-1006, Planned Permanent Living Arrangement Agreement](#).

2. The FSW must complete and submit the following:

- a) Whether requesting a sole or concurrent goal of PPLA, the FSW must complete form [CS-0681, Request for Permanency Goal of PPLA](#), which must be reviewed and approved by the Team Leader, Team Coordinator and Regional Administrator/Designee before it is submitted to Central Office. Signatures of those reviewing are required on the form.

NOTE: If approval for PPLA as a concurrent goal was previously approved, the FSW must submit another request in order to make PPLA the sole goal.

- b) Complete form [CS-1006, Planned Permanent Living Arrangement Agreement](#).

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- c) Include form [CS-0747, Child and Family Team Meeting Summary](#), describing the team's involvement and recommendation of this goal and any other paperwork considered to be relevant to the request, such as: court orders, reports or evaluations of therapists, documentation of adoption counseling, letters from the resource parents or the youth, etc.
- d) Contact information for all Child and Family Team members, as they may be contacted in the course of the review process.
- e) The above listed forms and any supporting documents should be submitted to Central Office via standard mail or faxed to the Assistant Director of Permanency Planning. (Since regional leadership signatures are required, e-mail requests will not be accepted.)

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- f) Following the submission of the request, staff should expect a written response within two weeks from receipt of the request. If Child and Family Team members need to be contacted, more time may be necessary. Upon receipt of the Commissioner/Designee's approval, the FSW should reconvene the CFT to revise the Permanency Plan with the new concurrent or sole goal of PPLA.