

**Permanency, Stabilization and
Services to Children With Disabilities Workgroup
Task Force on Child Protection
Status Report March 20, 2008**

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Conference Call Dates: 9/17, 9/25, 11/27, 12/4, 1/8, 1/14, 1/28, 2/19, **3/11, 3/12**

Child Welfare Services Need for Improvement:

Recommendation under consideration: Explore the need for legislative proposal for timeframes for achievement of permanency after termination of parental rights occurs.

Status: Since the last Task Force meeting, several group members have developed a proposal. The proposal specifies time frames for changes to case plan law specific to children with a goal of adoption. The group has scheduled another call April 3, 2008 to further refine this proposal. The following summarizes major elements of the proposal:

- recruitment plan to be filed with the court within 30 days of the TPR
- adoption casework activities to begin within 5 days of TPR order
- match staffing to be held within 30 days of home study being completed and the updated home study to be completed within 60 days of the TPR
- the prospective adoptive placement to be given the adoption packet within 10 days of the goal change to adoption
- a sibling separation staffing to be held no later than 30 days after the TPR
- the prospective adoptive parents to complete and return the packet to the appropriate person within 60 days
- the prospective adoptive parents shall hire an attorney to facilitate the adoption hearing within 30 days of the adoptive home study being approved
- initial inquiries from families interested in adopting a child(ren) shall be responded to either through a written or verbal reply within 3 business days of receiving the inquiry

Recommendation under consideration: Develop recommendations for core services as needed by every community to meet the needs of adoptive families (after finalization of adoption).

Status: This recommendation parallels work underway by the Office of Adoption and Child Protection, Executive Office of the Governor, Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency Advisory Council. The Council last met on March 10, 2008. It is chaired by Jim Kallinger, Chief Child Advocate and co-lead for this workgroup.

This workgroup has gathered preliminary information about the varying practices in the field for provision of post-finalization of adoption services. This includes a review of recent Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability (OPPAGA) reports on adoption and the research of Dr. Scott Ryan, Associate Professor, FSU College of Social Work.

A call has been scheduled to discuss next steps specific to this issue on April 3, 2008.

Recommendation under consideration: Explore the needs assessment and eligibility determination processes for children with disabilities for needed improvements.

Status:

The group has attempted to identify recommendations for improving the coordination of service delivery to children with disabilities without additional financial resources. The workgroup is aware of the serious financial constraints impacting our state. The group identified a gap in services specific to behavior analysis. After a presentation and discussion about the array of behavioral services including behavior analysis services availability, the group identified an existing parent training curriculum as a potential under used resource. This curriculum was developed by certified behavior analysts for foster and adoptive parents. Six hours of training is included in the pre-service or preparation training, Model Approach to Partnerships in Parenting (MAPP). In addition, there are 2 other courses of 15 and 30 hours duration. These courses provide additional skill building for foster/adoptive parents. Anecdotal reports are that families receiving this training and practicing these skills are better equipped to parent children with challenging behaviors.

Another issue was recently raised by workgroup participants regarding the consent requirements for children in state custody to receive Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD) services. This issue is set for discussion on the conference call scheduled for April 4, 2008.