

**COMPILATION OF
RECOMMENDATIONS
FROM PREVIOUS REPORTS
RELATING TO WASHINGTON'S
CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM**

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The Joint Task Force on Child Safety for Children in Child Protective Services or Child Welfare Services
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PLACEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

Policy and Procedure

1. Eliminate long-standing assumptions about "hard to place" youth and their families...These assumptions or practice biases lead to an emphasis on the need for a facility or facilities rather than re-thinking the nature of services and how and where they are delivered. *Adolescents* at 63.
2. Alternate non-kin placement resources should be available. The goal is to have an adequate pool of homes, matching the special needs and cultural and community connections of every child brought into care. There must also be support services available to alternate permanent families within their local communities. *Permanency* at 17.
3. By the end of 30 days in placement, conduct a team assessment of the child and family (including possible kinship caregivers) which will identify the needs of the child and the family system so that resources and on-going placement can be better matched. *Foster Care* at 3.
4. We recommend that DCFS review its out-of-home placement resources to develop a range of placement options sufficient and appropriate to the needs of children requiring placement. *Advisory* at 49.

Permanency

5. Aggressively and uniformly implement permanency strategies from the point of assessment as a basic practice. *Adolescents* at 67.
6. Minimize the frequency of "crisis placement" by enhancing transition planning, targeting solutions for those transitions creating the most crises. *Adolescents* at 68.
7. Encourage Courts to assume a leadership role in the overall dependency system and to adjust their processes to achieve permanency within the mandated State and Federal time lines. *Adolescents* at 74.

8. Permanency should be expedited. The goal is that within one year of placement, children are in their permanent home. *Permanency at 9.*
 - a. Subgoals include reunification with parents within 12 months, adoption or guardianship completed within 24 months, and children of color not in foster care at higher proportions than they are in the child population.
9. Permanency planning and implementation for young children should be expedited so that determinations can be made and completed by or before 12 months of placement. *Fatality Review at 12 (Grace Review).*
10. The goal is to have effective practices with younger children. Young children should have no more than two foster family placement. Within one year children are to be in their permanent home. *Permanency at 19.*
11. The length of time a child has been in placement and its impact on the emotional and psycho-logical well being of that child should be given greater weight by the court in determining whether a parent should reassume custody. *Fatality Review at 12 (Grace Review).*
12. The goal is to promote permanent family connections for adolescents and prepare them for adulthood. Every youth exiting the system should have an adult whom they can count on forever. Youths should complete vocational or educational degrees by the time they exit foster care. *Permanency at 23.*

Safety

13. Each child in the custody of the Department shall have a safe and stable placement with a caregiver capable of meeting the child's needs. *Braam at 6.*
14. All children in DCFS's custody shall be placed in safe placements. *Braam at 10.*
15. The State will continue to meet or exceed the federal standard for out-of-home care safety measure. *Braam at 10.*
16. We recommend that DCFS review its policies on the placement of children in out-of-home care to ensure that vulnerable children are not victimized by violent sexually aggressive youth. *Advisory at 49.*
17. State law should be modified to provide Juvenile Court authority to prescribe conditions of placement including the

responsibilities of unrelated members of the household (e.g. boyfriends, live-in relatives). *Fatality Review at 13 (Grace Review)*.

Relatives

18. Placement of siblings together is presumed to be in the children's best interest, unless there is a reasonable basis to conclude that the health, safety or welfare of a child is put in jeopardy by the placement. *Braam* at 11.
19. Frequent and meaningful contact between siblings in foster care who are not placed together and those who remain at home should occur, unless there is a reasonable basis to conclude that such visitation is not in the best interests of the children. *Braam* at 11.
20. Kin should be involved in permanency decisions and support provided to kin caring for children in their home. The goal is for more than half of the children in foster care are placed with kin who are willing to make a permanent commitment to them. Support services are available to kinship families within their communities. *Permanency* at 13.

Bibliography

1. "Select Committee on Adolescents in Need of Long Term Placement," (*Adolescents*), October 2002.
2. "Washington Permanency Report," Families for Kids Partnership (*Permanency*), 1998-2003.
3. "Foster Care Task Force: Final Report," DSHS Children's Administration (*Foster Care*), December 1999.
4. "A Community Perspective: The Report of The Child Welfare Citizen Advisory Board" (*Advisory*), February 1993.
5. "Recommendations of Respective CA Fatality Review Committees by Issue" Office of Family and Children's Ombudsman (*Fatality Review*), August 3, 2005.
6. "*Braam v. State of Washington*, Final Settlement," (*Braam*), July 31, 2004.