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**Charting the Course towards Permanency for Children in Pennsylvania**

*Module 9:*
*Out-of-Home Placement and Permanency Planning*

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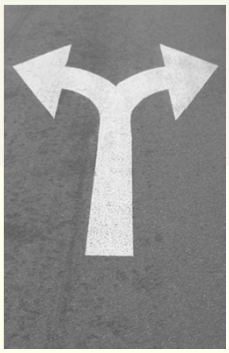
**SECTION I:**

**Introduction**



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**Agenda**

**Day One**

- Introduction
- The Importance of Permanency
- Supporting Children, Parents, and Substitute Caregivers throughout the Placement Process
- Permanency Goals Overview

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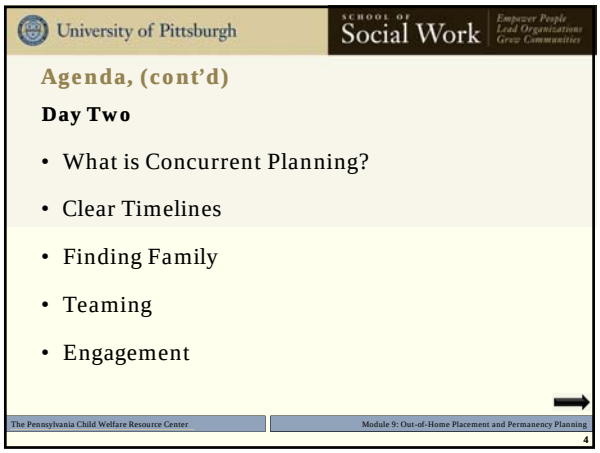
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Agenda, (cont'd)
Day Two
• What is Concurrent Planning?
• Clear Timelines
• Finding Family
• Teaming
• Engagement
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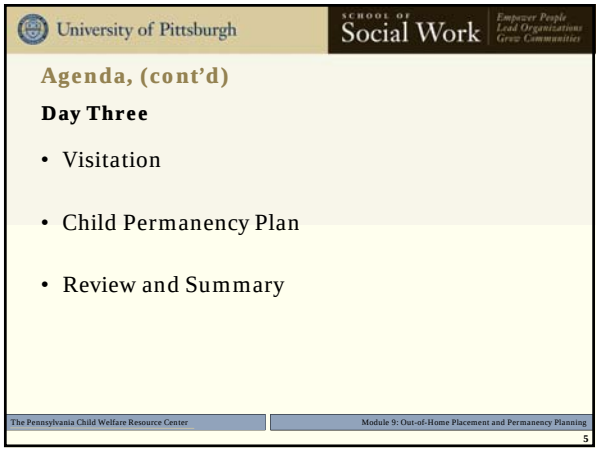
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Agenda, (cont'd)
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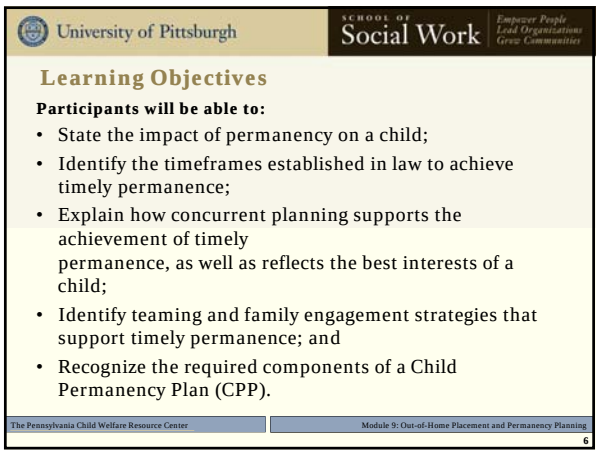
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Learning Objectives
Participants will be able to:
• State the impact of permanency on a child;
• Identify the timeframes established in law to achieve timely permanence;
• Explain how concurrent planning supports the achievement of timely permanence, as well as reflects the best interests of a child;
• Identify teaming and family engagement strategies that support timely permanence; and
• Recognize the required components of a Child Permanency Plan (CPP).
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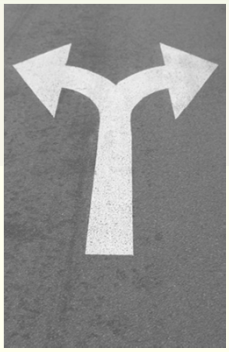
## SECTION II:

**The Importance of Permanency**



**Section Objectives:**
- Cite ways to consider permanency at various stages of casework practice.
- Give an example of the importance and impact of permanency.

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## What is Permanency?

- The establishment of an identified adult or family who has made a commitment to care for and to support a child up to and beyond the age of majority *(PA Concurrent Planning Bulletin)*
- ...will continue onward to provide enduring family connections and supports into adulthood *(PA Quality Service Review Protocol)*

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## Pennsylvania's Practice Model Outcome: Permanence

Children, youth, families, child welfare representatives and other child and family service partners participate as team members with shared community responsibility to achieve and maintain....

***Enduring and certain permanence and timely achievement of stability, supports and lifelong connections***

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### Video Worksheet: Multiple Transitions

Directions: Discuss and compare answers to the worksheet questions within your group.

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### Basic Permanency Assumptions

- Children have a right and a need to live and develop within safe, secure, and permanent families.
- Children have a right to live with parents/caregivers whom they can love, trust, and depend upon.
- Separation for extended periods of time may result in tremendous psychological and developmental disruption.
- A child's perception and experience of time are determined by his/her level of cognitive developmental maturity.

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### What is Permanency Planning?

- Permanency planning is, first and foremost, planning.
- Process directed toward the goal of a permanent, stable home for a child.
- Begins at intake, and focuses child welfare services on the child's need for a stable, permanent home during all phases of practice.

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### What is Permanency Planning? (cont'd)

- Step-by-step process of assessment, identification of goals and objectives, formulation of activities, and reassessment of the outcomes of services.
- Reminds us - All case planning activities MUST be directed toward assuring that every child in our care has a permanent family.

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### Idea Catcher

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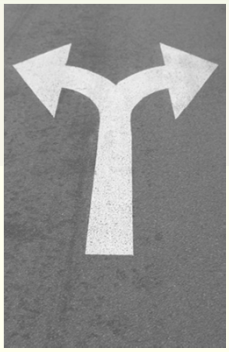
### SECTION III:

**Supporting Children, Parents, and Substitute Caregivers Throughout the Placement Process**



**Section Objectives:**
- Identify actions a child welfare professional can take to help minimize the traumatic effects of placement.
- Apply appropriate interactional skills to plan a supportive response that keeps the parent engaged.

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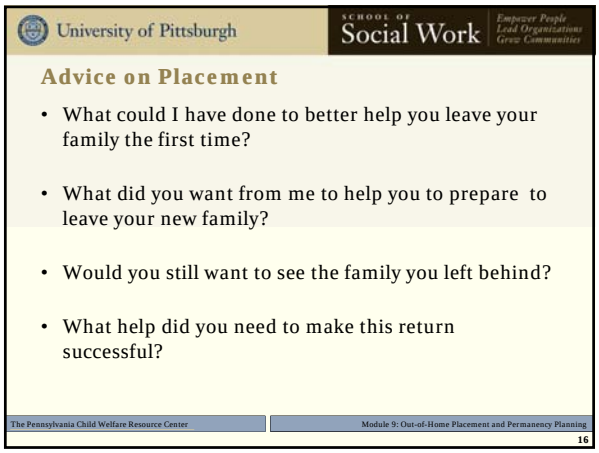
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Advice on Placement
• What could I have done to better help you leave your family the first time?
• What did you want from me to help you to prepare to leave your new family?
• Would you still want to see the family you left behind?
• What help did you need to make this return successful?
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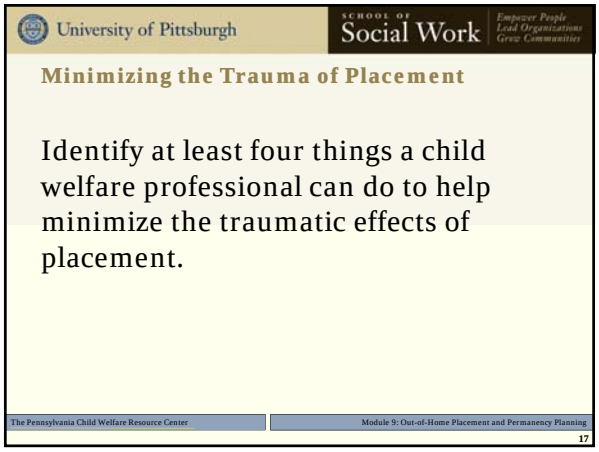
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Minimizing the Trauma of Placement
Identify at least four things a child welfare professional can do to help minimize the traumatic effects of placement.
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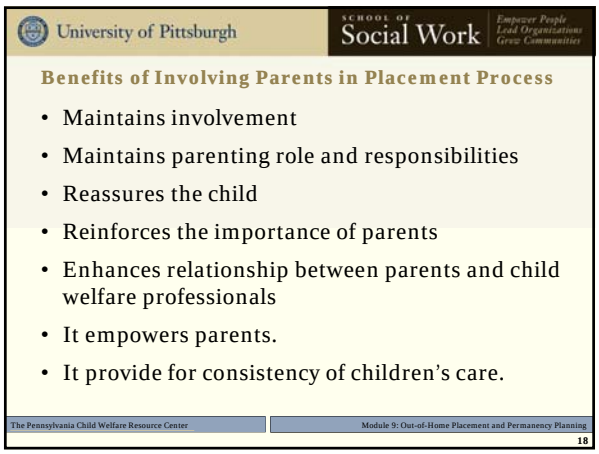
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Benefits of Involving Parents in Placement Process
• Maintains involvement
• Maintains parenting role and responsibilities
• Reassures the child
• Reinforces the importance of parents
• Enhances relationship between parents and child welfare professionals
• It empowers parents.
• It provide for consistency of children's care.
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**Instructions for Completing Handout #10 (Incorporating Interactional Helping Skills into Placement Practice)**

1. Review each situation with your partner.
2. Identify how you are feeling.
3. Explore (tuning in) how that person you speak with might be thinking or feeling about the situation.
4. Select one **Interactional Helping Skill**, besides tuning into others that may be especially useful when working through this particular issue.
5. Brainstorm with your partner ways in which to formulate a response that employs this skill.

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**The Needs of Older Youth Brainstorm**

In pairs, brainstorm the unique areas of need for older youth.

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**Six Service Areas of IL**

- Education/Training
- Employment
- Housing
- Life Skills
- Prevention/Wellness
- Support/Permanent Connections

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## Act 91 of 2012 Effective July 5, 2012

Allowed for resumption of jurisdiction for youth to return to out-of-home care beyond age 18 until age 21 by amending the definition of "Child" in the Juvenile Act

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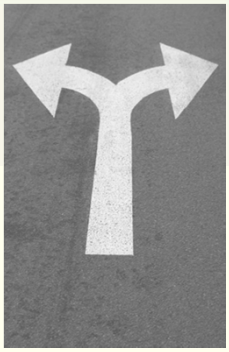
## SECTION IV:

**Permanency Goals**

**Section Objectives:**
- Identify the correct order of the permanency goal hierarchy.
- Recognize characteristics of the goals in the permanency goal hierarchy.
- Recognize strengths and concerns of the goals in the permanency goal hierarchy.



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## Hierarchy of Permanency Goals

1. **Return to Parents (AKA Reunification)**
2. **Adoption**
3. **Permanent Legal Custody (PLC)**
4. **Permanent Placement with a Fit and Willing Relative**
5. **Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (APPLA)**

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## Activity: Permanency Goal - Descriptions

**Directions:**

- **Select Recorder and Spokesperson**
- **Review Handout #12 (Permanency Goal Descriptions)**
- **Answer the 5 questions:**

1. Condition(s) for Finalization
2. Custody Status at Finalization
3. Agency Case Status
4. Parental Rights
5. Source of Financial Support

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## Extra Source of Financial Support for Older Youth

- Extended adoption subsidies for eligible youth
  - ✓ Under the age of 21 years
  - ✓ Attained 13 years of age before adoption assistance agreement was finalized
  - ✓ Met certain conditions
- Extended guardianship (PLC) subsidies for eligible youth
- Amended and added several definitions

Act 80 of 2012: Effective July 1, 2012

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## Agenda

**Day One**

- Introduction
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## Agenda, (cont'd)

**Day Two**

- What is Concurrent Planning?
- Clear Timelines
- Finding Family
- Teaming
- Engagement

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## Agenda, (cont'd)

**Day Three**

- Visitation
- Child Permanency Plan
- Review and Summary

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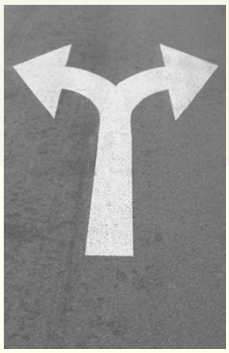
## SECTION V:

**What is Concurrent Planning?**



**Section Objectives:**
- Define concurrent planning.
- Explain why Pennsylvania employs concurrent planning as a permanency planning strategy.
- Recognize the eight components of a good concurrent plan.

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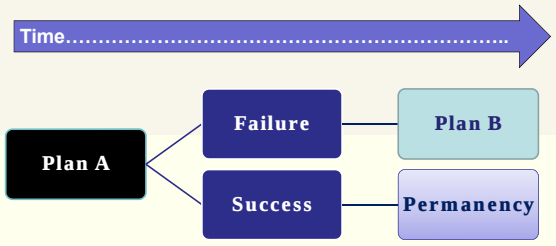
## Sequential Planning

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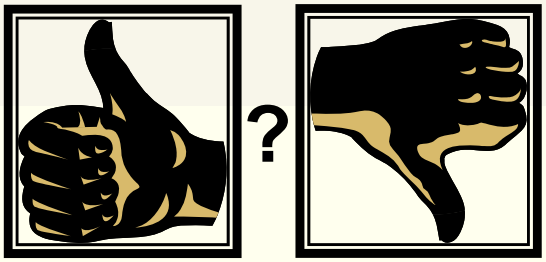
## Consequences of Sequential Planning



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## What is Concurrent Planning?

Plan A — Option

Plan B — Alternative

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## What is Concurrent Planning? (cont'd)

A process of working toward one legal permanency goal (typically reunification) while at the same time establishing and implementing an alternative permanency goal

Both goals are worked on **concurrently** to move children/youth more quickly to a safe and stable permanent family.

**ASFA cites concurrent planning as a best practice**

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(Permanency Roundtable Project, 2010) 36

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## Goals of Concurrent Planning

- To promote the **safety, permanency and well-being** of children and youth in out-of-home care;
- To achieve **timely permanency** for children and youth through early permanency decisions;
- To **reduce the number of moves** in the foster care system for children; and
- To **engage families** and relatives early and foster significant relationships between children in out-of-home care and their family/kin.

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## Activity: Potential Advantages and Challenges of Concurrent Planning

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## Who Gets a Concurrent Plan?

| Effective July 1, 2015: | Effective January 1, 2016: |
|---|---|
| **All children** entering foster care **with a goal of reunification** will have a concurrent plan established within 90 days of their placement. | **All children** who were already **in out-of-home care** will have a concurrent plan regardless of their court-ordered permanency goal. |

Concurrent Planning Policy and Implementation Bulletin # 3130-12-03

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## Eight Core Components of Concurrent Planning

1. Full disclosure to all participants in the case planning process
2. Family search and engagement
3. Family Group Decision Making/Family Group Conferencing/Teaming
4. Child/Family visitation
5. Establishment of clear timelines for permanency decisions
6. Transparent written agreements and documentation
7. Committed collaboration between child welfare agencies, the courts, resource families, service providers, and other stakeholders
8. Specific recruitment, training, and retention of resource families

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OCYF Bulletin 3130-12-03 40

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## Activity: Reviewing the Eight Core Components

**Directions:** Develop the expertise of your group:

- Review the content together.
- Work through anything that is not clear.
- Summarize by answering the questions provided.
- Make sure all group members are ready to share the summary with others

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## Rapid Review:

- **How would you explain concurrent planning?**
- **Why does Pennsylvania employ concurrent planning as a permanency planning strategy?**
- **Who gets a concurrent plan?**
- **Recap the eight core components of a good concurrent plan.**

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**Idea Catcher**

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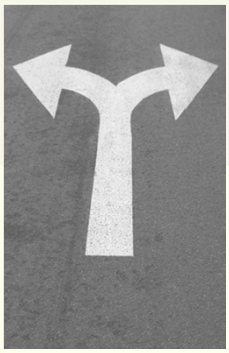
**SECTION VI:**

**Clear Timelines**

**Section Objective:**

- Identify timeframes associated with the five permanency goals, as outlined in the Concurrent Planning Bulletin.



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**Handouts**

| Permanency Timelines | Permanency Goal Comparisons |
|---|---|

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**Activity: Pair Share**

**Discuss the two handouts, the information they contain, and ways you may use them as job aids.**

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**Concurrent Planning: Reasonable Efforts Toward Both Goals**

Primary Goal

Concurrent Goal

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**A Key Reminder TPR: When to File**

**The earlier of:**

- **When grounds exist to file TPR**
- **When the child has spent 15 out of 22 months in out-of-home placement**

**Unless an exception applies.**

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**A Key Condition: When to Return to Parent?**

**The child is either:**
- **Safe or**
- **Safe with a safety plan**

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**A Sense of Urgency: Finalize Adoption ASAP!**

**Remember: Even when the child is living with the family that intends to adopt him or her, permanency is not yet achieved !**

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**Idea Catcher**

**Don't Let Ideas Get Away!**

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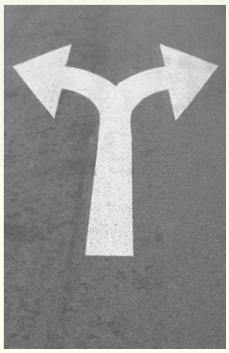
## SECTION VII:

**Finding Family**

**Section Objective:**
- Identify search efforts that meet legislative and policy requirements for family finding.
- Identify family search tools and strategies.



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## Why is finding family important?

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## Laws and Policy Relating to Diligent Search and Engagement

- The **Fostering Connections** to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 (H.R.6893/P.L. 110-351).
- **Act 25 of 2003**. (P. L. 31, No. 21.). Kinship Care.
- **Act 92 of 2015.** (P.L. 31, No. 21).
- **Act 55 of 2013** (P.L. 169, No. 25). Family Finding and Kinship Care Act.
- **Kinship care policy** (2003). OCYF Bulletin #00-03-03.
- **Concurrent Planning Policy** and Implementation (2012). OCYF Bulletin #3130-12-03.

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**Small Group Instructions**

1. **Read the summary of y0ur assigned legislation/policy.**
2. **Answer the discussion questions on Handout #17.**
3. **Record information on flipchart paper and hang on the wall when finished.**

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**Reporting Instructions**

1. **Explain assigned legislation/policy.**
2. **Describe the necessary steps a child welfare professional might take to ensure compliance with the legislation/policy when the removal of a child is necessary.**
3. **Explain how the legislation/policy helps to support timely permanence.**

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**Activity: Search and Engagement Resources**

Within your group, brainstorm which resources you might use or tap into to locate and engage family members in permanency planning.

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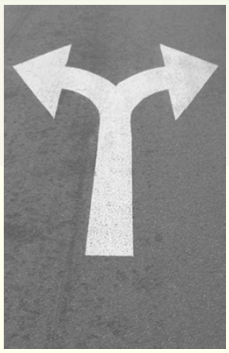
## SECTION VIII:

### Teaming

**Section Objectives:**

- Describe the composition of a well-formed team supporting permanency planning.
- Describe the contributions of a well-functioning team to achieve successful permanency outcomes.



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## Teaming as a Value/Principle

- Children, youth and families are best served through a team approach with shared responsibilities. All team members have a role and voice. Involving the child, youth, family and extended support networks as active members of the team empowers the family.
- Teams are strength-based and collaborate toward common goals.
- Teams change as needed to include all formal and informal supports and resources.
- Team members are accountable for their actions, keeping commitments and following through with agreed upon responsibilities.

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## Teaming as a Skill

**Team formation:** Engaging and assembling the members of the team, including the family, throughout all phases of the change process and based on current needs and goals.

**Team functioning:** Teaming is defining and demonstrating a unified effort, common purpose and clear roles and responsibilities that support positive change.

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## Why Team for Permanency?

I am ___. If I am not part of the team, you are missing ___ from me.

If I don't know about the primary goal and the concurrent goal, let me explain how I may impact the child's permanency. _____.

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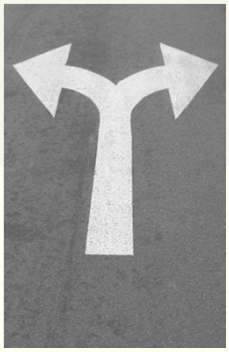
## SECTION IX:

**Engagement**



**Section Objectives:**
- Define full disclosure.
- Identify the Interactional Helping Skills employed to effectively engage parties in a full disclosure conversation.
- Identify appropriate responses to concerns raised during a full disclosure conversation.

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## What is Full Disclosure?

A respectful, honest and candid **discussion** that **begins when the child is placed in out-of-home care** and **continues throughout the life of the case** surrounding the agency's intent to work towards the implementation of two permanency goals.

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## Full Disclosure To All Team Members

- **Parents**
- **Child/Youth**
- **Resource Family**
- **Other Stakeholders**

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## Full Disclosure: A Tool for Transparency and Engagement

- The child's needs for permanency.
- How family search, engagement, and teaming support timely permanence.
- How the agency, in collaboration with the family team, will work toward achieving two permanency goals at the same time.
- The time frames and related requirements established by law and policy to achieve timely permanence.



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## Small Group Discussion Questions

- How would full disclosure to this team member differ from full disclosure to other team members?
- What would be this person's main concerns?
- What might you plan to say to address those concerns?



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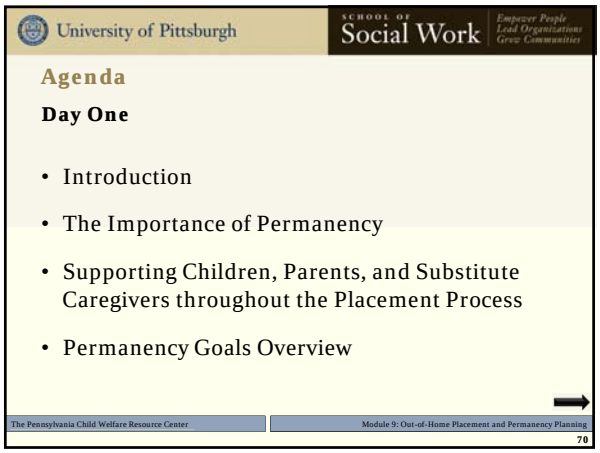
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Agenda
Day One
• Introduction
• The Importance of Permanency
• Supporting Children, Parents, and Substitute Caregivers throughout the Placement Process
• Permanency Goals Overview
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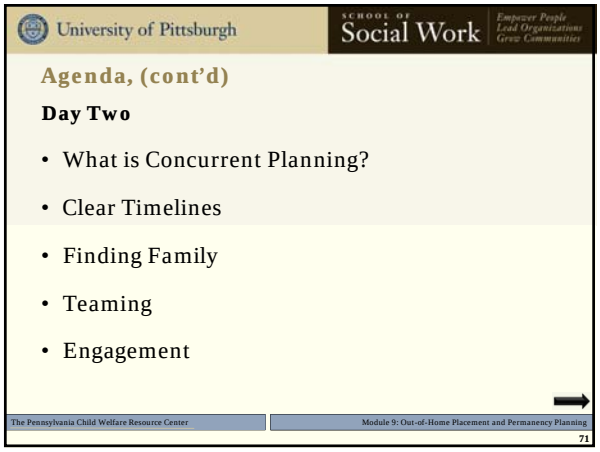
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Agenda, (cont'd)
Day Two
• What is Concurrent Planning?
• Clear Timelines
• Finding Family
• Teaming
• Engagement
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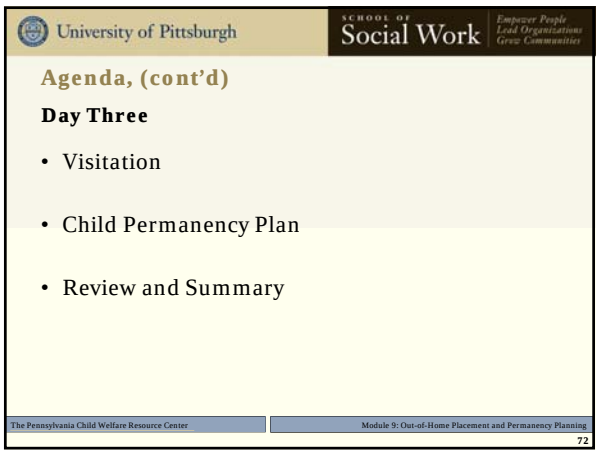
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Agenda, (cont'd)
Day Three
• Visitation
• Child Permanency Plan
• Review and Summary
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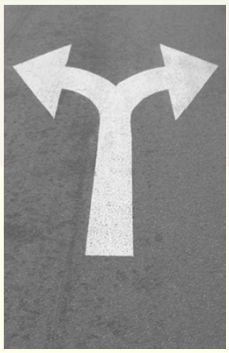
## SECTION X:

**Visitation**

**Section Objectives:**
- Cite the benefits of visitation.
- List different ways to supplement family visitation.
- Identify common visitation barriers and ways to address them.



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## Brainstorm Activity: Visitation

1. What are the benefits of visitation?
2. What are the consequences of not providing visitation?

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## Impact of Visitation

**Research shows that visitation:**

- Is the single most important factor in maintaining the relationship between the child in out-of-home care and the parents.
- Enhances the child's emotional well-being.
- Improves parent's positive feelings about the placement.
- Decreases parents' worries about their children.
- Is associated with achieving permanency and decreasing time in care.

(Hess, P.M., 2003)

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## Impact of Separation

**Without visitation, research shows:**

- Infants and toddlers who do not develop secure attachments produce elevated levels of cortisol (a stress hormone), which may alter the developing brain circuits and cause long-term harm *(National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, 2014).*
- Young children with unhealthy attachments are at much greater risk for delinquency, substance abuse, and depression later in life *(Hardy, L.T., 2007; Sroufe, A. et. al., 1999; Caspers, K.M. et. al., 2006; Thompson, R.A., 2001)*
- Children's reaction to and ability to cope with separation from a parent depend on their age and developmental stage (Wright, L.E., 2001)
- Because multiple placements and attachment disruptions are likely to be harmful at any age, **concurrent planning** should be used at the outset of each case *(Committee on Early Childhood, Adoption and Dependent Care, 2000)*

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## Visitation Requirements

- Visitation with parents must be offered at least every two weeks and whenever possible, weekly visitation should occur for children with a reunification plan.
- Sibling visits for children in placement must be offered at least two times per month.
- Visitation must be face-to-face.
- Other forms of parent and sibling contact are encouraged to supplement face-to-face visits.

Concurrent Planning Policy and Implementation. OCYF Bulletin #3130-12-03
Act 115 of 2010, Placement and Visitation with Siblings

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## Visitation

What does a typical family visit look like for your children in out-of-home placement?

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### Frequent Face-to-Face Visitation

What can make frequent face-to-face visitation difficult to arrange?

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### Modes of Contact

Describe other ways a child could stay connected with a parent, besides face-to-face visitation?

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### Technology and Child Welfare

"Many child welfare jurisdictions have begun to expand their use of technology in serving families and children, including the use of electronic, audio, video and internet technologies"

(Tregeagle & Darcy, 2008).

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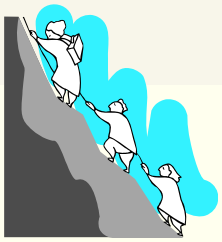
## Discuss: Barriers and Challenges



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## Activity: Solutions and Resources

**Directions:** Given a visitation plan, strategize to overcome barriers:

- Review the information in the visitation plan for your assigned person.
- As a group, develop a list of solutions or resources to consult with in order to overcome the identified barriers.
- Fill in the missing pieces of the visitation plan, using your identified solutions and resources.

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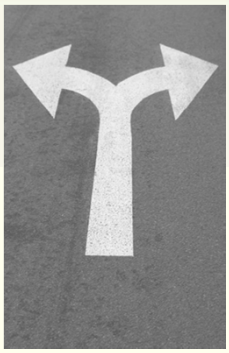
## SECTION XI:

### Child Permanency Plan

**Section Objectives:**

- Identify the appropriate primary goal and concurrent goal for a given child.
- Rank order residential environments by preference according to level of restrictiveness.
- Identify the required components of a Child Permanency Plan (CPP).
- Identify appropriate SWAN services to help a child achieve permanency.



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## Required Components of a Child Permanency Plan

1. Efforts made/service provided to prevent placement
2. Description of circumstances that make placement necessary
3. Identifying information
4. Description of placement
5. Hearings
6. Permanency goals
7. Heath Information
8. Education information
9. Visitation Plan
10. Preparation for Independence (IL)
11. Service Plan
12. Notice of right to appeal
13. Participating team members
14. Signatures

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## Restrictiveness of Living Environment

| Rating | Residential Environment |
|---|---|
| 1 | Family of Origin |
| 2 | Non-Custodial Parent |
| 3 | Kinship Resource Home |
| 4 | Supervised Independent Living |
| 5 | Resource Home (non-kin) |
| 6 | Group Home |
| 7 | Residential Treatment Facility (RTF) |
| 8 | Drug and Alcohol Treatment Facility |
| 9 | Psychiatric Hospital |

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## Maintaining Connections for Older Youth

# Speak Out

Source: Allegheny County, the Department of Human Services (DHS). Speak Out: Allegheny County's Youth Support Partners (YSPs). http://vimeo.com/89307451

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## SWAN Units of Service

| | |
|---|---|
| **Child Preparation** | **Child Placement** |
| **Child Profile** | **Adoption Finalization** |
| **CSR** | **Post Permanency Services:** |
| **Family Profile Child Placement** | • Advocacy<br>• Support Groups<br>• Respite/Family Support |

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http://www.diakon-swan.org/mission.asphttp://www.diakon-swan.org/mission.asp 89

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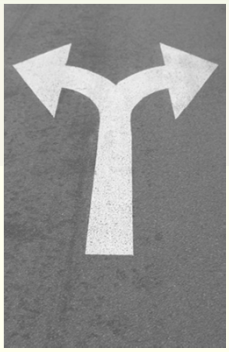
## SECTION XII:

**Review and Summary**

**Section Objectives**:
- Summarize the importance of timely legal permanence.
- Create an action plan for applying learning on the job.



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## Activity: Action Plan

Handout 4: Idea Catcher

**Question:**
**How will you use some of the things you learned during this workshop?**

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## Review: Learning Objectives

Are you prepared to:

- State the impact of permanency on a child;
- Identify the timeframes established in law to achieve timely permanence;
- Explain how concurrent planning supports the achievement of timely;
  permanence, as well as reflects the best interests of a child;
- Identify teaming and family engagement strategies that support timely permanence; and
- Recognize the required components of a Child Permanency Plan (CPP)?

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## Course Evaluations

**Your feedback helps us to continuously improve our course offerings.**

**Thank you!**

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## Knowledge Check

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**Activity: The Permanency Game**

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**Let's Play!**

**Permanency Game Rules:**

- Sibling groups are identified by color.
- Each sibling group gets one turn each round.
- Select a card and read it aloud.
- Follow the instructions on the card. The sibling group may need to make decisions, depending upon the instructions on the card.
- If you land on an arrow, slide to the end of the arrow.
- Players must travel the entire way around the board to get home. In other words, a player cannot win by going backwards.

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**Game Debrief Discussion**

- How did you feel?
- What did you think?
- What will you remember?
- What will you carry back into practice?

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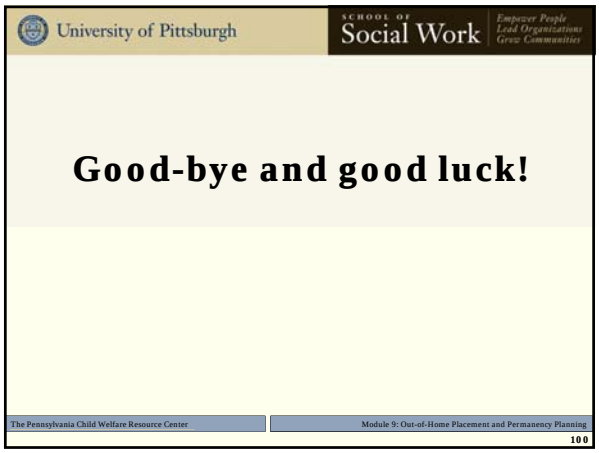
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Good-bye and good luck!
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