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ISSUED/REVISED: 11-22-1985CONTINUING SERVICES
PROGRAMSECTION: 31-088
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EFFECTIVE: 10-01-2020**I. OVERVIEW**

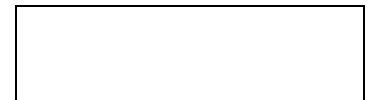
Continuing Services is a program within the Contra Costa County Children & Family Services (CFS) Bureau. Children and families are transferred to the Continuing Services Program when counts of child abuse, neglect, or exploitation are sustained, and the child/youth is adjudged a dependent of the juvenile court. The Continuing Services Program consists of three service components:

- [Family Maintenance](#)
- [Family Reunification](#)
- [Permanent Placement](#)

II. POLICY

The Continuing Services (CS) Program provides timely services and case management to families, with an emphasis on safety, permanency, and well-being. Services may be court ordered or by voluntary agreement between the family and Bureau. If the child cannot safely remain in the home, the child is placed in out-of-home care while trauma-informed, culturally relevant services are delivered to strengthen and reunify the family. Social Workers (SWs) are mandated to engage in Concurrent Planning so timely permanency can be achieved in the event a child cannot be returned home and an alternate, permanent family structure is needed. CS Social Workers carry a caseload that encompasses a combination of the following service components:

- Family Maintenance
 - Intensive Family Services
- Family Reunification
 - Voluntary Family Reunification
- Permanent Placement
 - Preparation for Adoption
 - Legal Guardianship
 - Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (APPLA)



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III. SERVICE COMPONENTS FOR CONTINUING SERVICES CASES

A. Family Maintenance (Voluntary/Non-Court or Court Ordered)

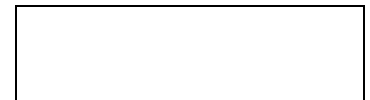
Family Maintenance (FM) involves families whose children have been made court dependents, but remain in the home as safety assessments permit. FM services are provided when a voluntary agreement is reached between the parent(s)/guardian(s) and Bureau, or when the court orders supervised services. FM services are intended to stabilize a family by strengthening its natural and community supports to alleviate further child welfare intervention. Social Workers assigned to FM cases have a dual role in providing case management services to ensure long-term success for the family unit, and assessing for ongoing risk and safety factors to determine if the child/youth can remain in the home.

1. Types of Family Maintenance (FM) Cases

- **Intensive Family Services (IFS).** IFS is a voluntary program for families interested in receiving services from CFS without court involvement. If a mutual agreement is signed by the parent(s) and Bureau, services and supports are provided to preserve the family unit and alleviate issues that may lead to a child's removal from his/her natural setting.
- **Case Transferred from Court following the Dispositional Hearing.** A case may be transferred to FM when the child is made a dependent and is permitted to remain in the home while case management services are provided to the family.
- **Case Transferred from Family Reunification.** Cases where the active service component is Family Reunification may transition to FM when court orders are modified from out-of-home placement to at-home care with the parent/guardian, while supportive services continue.

2. Family Maintenance Timelines

FM services are typically provided for a six to twelve month period. Services may continue beyond 12 months in intervals of six months as ordered by the Court, if it can be shown that the objectives of the case plan can be reached within the extended time periods.



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3. Responsibilities for Family Maintenance Cases

Services provided by the CS Social Worker for Family Maintenance cases typically include, but are not limited to:

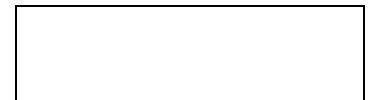
- Connect the family unit to community resources and needs-based services.
- Engage in teaming processes with the child, family, and formal and natural supports to help the family meet their safety goals.
- Attend Child and Family Team (CFT) meetings and adhere to the mandated timelines for all meeting occurrences.
- Provide information to the court.
- Document all work and efforts in CWS/CMS.
- Assess the parent(s)/guardian(s) and child's ongoing needs.
- Assess the level of risk and safety to the child/youth in the home.
- Develop a case plan with the parent(s) and monitor case plan progress and compliance.
- Meet monthly, face-to-face, with the child and parent(s) in the home.
- Arrange and monitor visitation of the child with the non-custodial parent, when applicable, and coordinate any sibling visitation.

B. Family Reunification (Court Ordered or Voluntary/Non-Court)

Family Reunification (FR) cases involve children who have been removed from their parents or legal guardians. Reunification services are typically court-ordered, but may be voluntary. The role of Family Reunification is to work in partnership with the family to reunite the child and parent(s) by providing formal services to strengthen the family unit.

1. Types of Family Reunification Cases

- **Court-ordered Family Reunification Services.** Court-ordered Family Reunification Services begin when:
 - The petition alleging abuse, neglect, or exploitation is sustained and the child cannot safely be maintained in the home; and
 - The court has made an out-of-home placement order
- **Voluntary Family Reunification.** Voluntary Family Reunification is a short-term, voluntary program. If the family



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agrees to participate in Voluntary FR, the child/youth is placed in out-of-home care for up to 180 days. During this time, the family is provided with services to address barriers and make the home safe for the child to return. If the child cannot be returned home within 180 days, a petition must be filed for court-ordered FR.

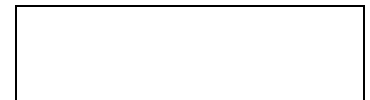
2. Family Reunification Timelines. The timeline for provision of services to reunify the family unit varies, and is contingent upon the age of the child at removal.

- **For children under age three**, six months of services are initially ordered. Additional services, in six-month increments, may be ordered if there is substantial probability the child may return home.
- **For children age three or over**, the Court may order up to 12 months of services. Additional services, in six-month increments, may be ordered if there is substantial probability the child may return home.
- **For a mixed sibling group in which some of the children are under age three and are placed together**, the Court may order services for six months. Additional services, in six-month increments, may be ordered if there is substantial probability the child may return home.

3. Responsibilities for Family Reunification Cases

Services provided by the CS Social Worker for Family Reunification cases typically include, but are not limited to:

- Engage in a teaming process with the child, family, and formal and natural supports to help the family meet their safety goals and successfully transition out of the child welfare system.
- Meet with parent(s)/guardian(s) to review the initial case plan, and update the case plan with parent(s)/guardian(s) when applicable.
- Attend CFS internal, inter-agency, and youth/family team meetings as required.
- Provide information to the Court.
- Document all work and efforts in CWS/CMS.
- Make referrals for needs-based services (e.g., therapy, parenting classes, substance abuse treatment, etc.).



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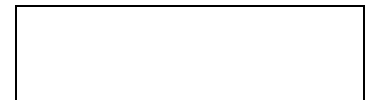
- Identify barriers to reunification to assist parents/guardians with addressing these barriers.
- Promote a supportive parent-child relationship by fostering regular, quality visitation. Visitation for the child may also be facilitated with siblings, and relatives, as appropriate.
- Assist parents in creating a safe and supportive home environment.
- Engage in concurrent planning by balancing the goals of reunification while simultaneously planning for an alternative form of legal permanency. This includes ensuring the child is in a resource home willing to provide permanency if reunification efforts fail.
- Assess, arrange, and maintain the least restrictive placement for the child while he/she is in out-of-home care.
- Meet monthly face-to-face with the child to assess his/her physical and emotional health, placement, safety, needs, and development.
- Meet monthly face-to-face with the child's caregivers to assess for safety, gather information, and provide support to preserve and strengthen the placement.
- Meet monthly face-to-face with the parent(s)/legal guardian(s) to monitor services and case plan progress.
- Maintain regular contact with service providers to remain aware of supports being provided and the family's progress.

C. Permanent Placement

Permanent Placement (PP) is legally mandated when reunification services have been terminated and a judicial determination of a permanent plan of adoption or legal guardianship has been made. PP services are designed to provide an alternative permanent family structure for children/youth who cannot safely be returned home. Services may include supportive transition services for older youth and Nonminor Dependents (NMDs) as needed.

1. Types of Permanent Plans for Children/Youth

Adoption. Adoption is a process that creates a new legal parent-child relationship by terminating the biological parents' rights and transferring those rights and responsibilities to the adoptive parent(s). Adoption is the most preferred permanent plan when



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reunification is not a viable option, and is considered the only acceptable plan for a child under three years of age, unless the child is placed with a relative who is committed to providing permanency, but is unwilling or unable to adopt.

Cases for which Adoption is the identified permanent plan are transferred to the Adoptions Unit when Family Reunification services are terminated.

Legal Guardianship. Legal Guardianship is a legal arrangement in which a relative, Non-Related Extended Family Member (NREFM), or other caregiver has court-ordered authority and responsibility to care for the child/youth. Cases where Legal Guardianship is the identified permanent plan remain with the CS Social Worker until Dependency is vacated and dismissed.

Guardianship does not provide the same level of permanency afforded through adoption, but can facilitate continuity of formal and legal ties to the child’s biological family. Legal guardians have the authority to make decisions on behalf of the child and are responsible for a child’s personal needs, including shelter, education, and medical care. Relative caregivers may be eligible to participate in the Kinship Guardianship Assistance Payment Program (Kin-GAP).

Legal guardianship may be terminated when a parent successfully petitions to resume guardianship of the child/youth, when a judge determines guardianship is no longer necessary, or when a guardian resigns.

Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (APPLA). APPLA (formerly known as Long Term Foster Care) is typically the permanent plan when there is no available or willing adult to adopt or serve as a legal guardian to a youth in care, and a permanent, lifelong connection has not been identified yet. APPLA is the least desirable outcome for children/youth in foster care. Under federal and state law, APPLA can only be ordered by the Court for youth age 16 and older.

Youth who turn 18 years old while under an order of foster care placement may be eligible to participate in Extended Foster Care (AB 12).

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2. Responsibilities for Permanent Placement Cases

Services provided by the CS Social Worker for Permanent Placement cases typically include, but are not limited to:

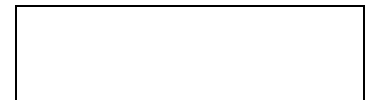
- Attend CFS internal, inter-agency, and child/family team meetings as required.
- Provide information to the Court.
- Document all work and efforts in CWS/CMS.
- Create and prepare the child/youth's case file for transfer to the Adoptions Unit within 14 calendar days and no later than 60 days before the next court hearing when Family Reunification services are terminated and Adoption is the identified permanent plan.
- Monitor the case plan and update when applicable.
- For older youth in a court-ordered plan of APPLA, identify necessary services that will further the youth's transition to independent living and successful adulthood. This includes identifying lifelong connections.
- Meet monthly with the child/youth to assess his/her physical and emotional health, placement, safety, needs, and development.
- Maintain monthly face-to-face contact with the child/youth's caregivers to assess for safety, gather information, and provide support to preserve and strengthen the placement.

IV. RESOURCES

- A. [Continuing Services Related CFS Policies](#)
- B. [Continuing Services CFS References](#)

V. REFERENCES

California Department of Social Services (CDSS) Manual of Policies and Procedures (MPP) Division 31 Child Welfare Services Program
Health and Safety Code (HSC) Section 1536.2
Welfare & Institutions Code (WIC) Section 300 – 452
Welfare & Institutions Code Section 16501.1 – 16523.59



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All County Letters (ACLs):

- 19-94 Presumptive Transfer for Children and Youth Placed in Short-Term Residential Therapeutic Programs
- 19-87 Quality Caseworker Visits and Application of Integrated Core Practice Model
- 19-27 Gender Affirming Care for Minor and Nonminor Dependents in Foster Care
- 19-26 Placement Change Requirements
- 18-81, 18-81E Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) Assessment Tool Within a Child and Family Team (CFT) Process
- 18-61 New Mandates Regarding Case Plan Documentation and Training Related to Reproductive and Sexual Health Care Needs and Rights of Foster Youth
- 18-60 Presumptive Transfer Policy Guidance
- 18-42 Family Finding and Engagement
- 18-23 The Child and Family Team (CFT) Process Questions and Answers
- 17-122 Short-Term Residential Therapeutic Programs (STRTPS) Placement Criteria, Interagency Placement Committees (IPCs), Second Level Review for Ongoing Placements into Group Homes and STRTPS
- 17-107 Assessing Child Safety and Appropriate Monitoring of Safety Plans
- 17-104, 17-104E Documentation of Child and Family Teams (CFTs) in the Child Welfare Services/Case Management System (CWS/CMS)
- 17-81, 17-81E, 17-81E2 Out-of-County Placement of Dependents in Foster Care
- 16-84 Requirements and Guidelines for Creating and Providing a Child and Family Team
- 16-28 Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (APPLA)

CONTACT PERSON: First-line Supervisors and above may contact the Continuing Services Program Analyst with questions concerning this Department Manual Section.