

Outcome P1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations.

Item 7. Permanency Goal for Child (Case Record, Interview With Caseworker)

Core Questions	Permanency Goal			
A. What is the child's current permanency goal (or if the case is closed, what was the most recent permanency goal before the case was closed)?				
	Yes	No	Not Applicable	
A1. If the goal is "other permanent planned living arrangement," have other more permanent goals been considered and ruled out?				
<p>Reviewers should explore and document below the reasons why other permanency goals were not considered and/or were ruled out.</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>				
B. How long has the current or most recent permanency goal been in place (or if the case is closed, how long was the last goal in place)?				
	Yes		No	
C. Is the permanency goal (or the one that was in effect before the case was closed) appropriately matched to the child's individual needs for permanency and stability?				
D. Indicate below how many prior permanency goals the child has had and for what lengths of time.				
Permanency Goal	Date Goal Established	Length of Time Goal Was in Effect		
	Yes	No	Not Applicable	Exception Noted (Specify)
E. If the child has been in foster care 15 of the most recent 22 months (or was before the case was closed) or meets other Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) criteria for termination of parental rights (TPR), has the agency filed or joined a petition to terminate parental rights? Reviewers should check not applicable if the child has been/was in foster care less than 15 of the most recent 22 months. (It is emphasized that N.C.G.S. 7B-907 requires a petition for TPR to be filed after the child has been in DSS custody or placement authority for 12 of the most recent 22 months, or the court order must contain one of the three acceptable exceptions to TPR.)				
<i>(Instructions for this question continue on the next page)</i>				

Reviewers will need to determine whether a child: (1) has been in foster care for 15 of the past 22 months, (2) is an abandoned child, or (3) is a child whose parents have been convicted of one of the felonies designated in Section 475 (5)(E) of the Social Security Act. (This would include if the parent had (1) committed murder of another child of the parent; (2) committed voluntary manslaughter of another child of the parent; (3) aided or abetted, attempted, conspired, or solicited to commit such a murder or such a voluntary manslaughter; or (4) committed a felony assault that results in serious bodily injury to the child or another child of the parent.) Reviewers then make a determination about whether a TPR petition or an exception to the TPR requirements is/was required.

Reviewers must be familiar with the ASFA TPR requirements and exceptions. Reviewers should document if the child has been in care for the maximum time or if another ASFA criterion for TPR exists. In other words, either a TPR must be filed or an exception noted in the **court order**.

Exceptions include the following: (1) the child is being cared for by a relative, and the permanent plan for the child is custody or guardianship with that relative, or (2) the court order reflects a compelling reason for determining that a TPR would not be in the best interests of the child, (e.g. it is not in the best interest of the child to file a petition for TPR because), or (3) the State agency has not provided to the family, services consistent with the time period in the case plan, that the State deemed necessary for the safe return of the child to the child's home, when reasonable efforts to reunify the family are required.

For rating purposes, reviewers will use the ASFA time frame. **Exceptions to TPR must be contained in court orders. Every review court order must contain this required ASFA language.**

Exploratory Questions

- What is/was the history of the permanency goals?
- Are/were there notable changes or lack of changes in the child's permanency goals?
- What are/were the reasons for changes in the child's permanency goals?
- What factors did the agency consider when making decisions about the child's permanency goals?
- Has the child been in foster care for 15 of the most recent 22 months, is the child an abandoned infant, or does the child have parents who have committed a felony requiring TPR under ASFA?
- Has/was an exception to the TPR requirement been made and, if so, what was the basis for the exception (for example, the child is being cared for by a relative or the State has not provided services that the State deemed necessary for the safe return of the child to the child's home)?

Rating for Item 7:		Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable
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Instructions for Item 7: Permanency Goal for Child

This item focuses on the process of establishing the most appropriate permanency goal for the child. This item applies only to children in foster care. Reviewers should rate this item for the goal(s) in place during the period under review.

If a previous goal was in place and unachieved for a considerable length of time before the most recent change, this should be documented below and taken into consideration when rating the item (for example, 3 months before the onsite review, the goal was changed to adoption; however a goal of reunification was in place and unachieved for 5 years).

Reviewers should examine the appropriateness of a goal that ultimately rules out adoption, guardianship, or return to family. Reviewers must assess whether the child's best interests were thoroughly considered by the State agency in setting a goal of other planned living arrangement, and that such a decision is/was continually reviewed for ongoing appropriateness.

(Instructions continue on the next page)

If the State agency is using concurrent planning for the child, the permanency goals recorded for this item should reflect the child's primary permanency goal outlined in the case plan. If there are two permanency goals, and the State's policy dictates that the goals have equal weight, reviewers should record both.

For purposes of determining if a child was in foster care 15 of the most recent 22 months, reviewers should consider the date the child entered foster care as the earlier of the following: (1) the date of a judicial finding (In NC, this is the date of the non-secure order or VPA) of abuse or neglect *or* (2) 60 calendar days after the child's removal from the home. Reviewers should calculate time cumulatively over a 22-month period and should not include trial home visits or runaway episodes.

Due to changes in circumstances, a caseworker may have identified and provided services in support of a new goal for the child, which is/was not approved by or changed with the court. In this case, reviewers should rate the item based on the goal identified by the agency even if it is/was not the official goal of record with the court.

Provide documentation that supports the rating for item 7

This item is rated as a(n) _____ because: _____

Outcome P1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations.

Item 9. Adoption – Complete only for children with a current or most recent permanency goal of adoption (Case Record, Interviews With Caseworker)

Core Questions	Yes	No	Not Applicable
A. Was the child’s adoption finalized within 24 months of the most recent entry into foster care? Reviewers need to identify whether the most recent permanency goal has been achieved. If steps have been taken toward the goal of adoption (for example, termination of parental rights, child placement in a pre-adoptive home) but the adoption is not finalized, then the goal has not been achieved. Reviewers should check not applicable if the child has not been in foster care for 24 months and has not been adopted.			
A1. If the response to question A is no, what were the barriers to the child’s adoption being finalized within 24 months of his/her most recent entry into foster care? Since this item measures achievement of the permanency goal within 24 months of the child’s most recent entry into foster care, reviewers should consider barriers outside the period under review if the child was already in foster care at the onset of the period under review. _____ _____ _____ _____			
B. If the child has been in foster care less than 24 months since the most recent entry into foster care, are steps in place to finalize the adoption within the 24-month timeframe?			
B1. If the response to question B is yes, describe the steps. _____ _____ _____			
B2. If the response to question B is no, what are the barriers to finalizing the adoption? _____ _____ _____			

Exploratory Questions

- What length of time has/was the child been in foster care since the most recent entry into foster care?
- What is/was the status of planning/efforts to finalize the child’s adoption?
- Is the child legally free for adoption?
- What are/were the efforts to identify an adoptive family or to legally free the child for adoption?
- What are/were the barriers to placing the child for adoption?
- What are/were the barriers to freeing the child for adoption?
- Was the child listed on the Adoption Resource Exchange within 30 days of being legally free for adoption, unless a permanent family has been identified?

Rating for Item 9:		Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable
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(Continued)

Instructions for Item 9: Adoption

This item focuses on the achievement of a child’s goal of adoption.

This item applies only to children in foster care.

Achievement of an adoption goal means finalization of the adoption.

Reviewers should document the reasons for delays in the adoption process and the agency’s efforts to address the delays.

If the response to question A is no, reviewers must provide substantial documentation of agency efforts to finalize the adoption within 24 months in order to rate this item a strength.

Provide documentation that supports the rating for item 9

This item is rated as a(n) _____ because: _____

Outcome P1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations.				
Item 10. Permanency Goal of Other Planned Permanent Living Arrangement – Complete only for children with a current or most recent permanency goal of a planned permanent living arrangement of custody or guardianship to a court approved caretaker (Case Record, Interviews With Caseworker, Foster Parent(s), Child, and Parent(s))				
Core Questions		Custody to a court approved caretaker	Guardianship to a court approved caretaker	
A. What is the child’s permanency goal?				
			Yes	No
B. Has/was the goal been achieved?				
<p>Reviewers need to identify whether the most recent permanency goal has been achieved. For example, if the goal is custody to a court approved caretaker and steps have been taken toward the goal (for example, identification of a potential permanent caretaker) but the custody has not yet been given to that person, and the child remains in foster care, then the goal has not been achieved.</p>				
B1. If the response to question B is no, what are the barriers to achieving the goal?				
<p>Reviewers need to identify whether the goal has been addressed appropriately and if not, document the reasons.</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>				
			Yes	No
C. Are/were services being provided to help the child achieve the goal of another planned living arrangement (including independent living services, if appropriate)?				
Exploratory Questions				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What factors were considered in determining the goal? • What were the reasons this goal was selected rather than reunification, guardianship or permanent placement (custody) with a relative, or adoption? How does/did the agency review the goal for continued appropriateness since the goal was initially established? • What factors are/were affecting or delaying goal achievement? • What are/were the agency’s efforts to achieve the permanency goal? 				
Rating for Item 10:			Strength	
			Area Needing Improvement	
				Not Applicable

Instructions for Item 10: Permanency Goal of Other Planned Permanent Living Arrangement

This item focuses on the achievement of a child’s permanency goal of “other planned living arrangement” and includes youth for whom independent living services are appropriate.

This item should be completed only for children in foster care with a permanency goal of a planned living arrangement other than adoption, guardianship, or return to family, i.e. custody or guardianship to a court approved caretaker who is not a relative.

(Instructions continue on the next page)

This item applies only to children in foster care.

This item is used, in part, to determine whether the State agency is in substantial conformity with Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) requirements that services be provided to assist children to attain permanency in their living arrangements.

Reviewers should review for and note any delays in the child’s achievement of the permanency goal and the reasons for those delays.

If the child does not have a permanency goal of other planned living arrangement, this item should be rated as not applicable.

Provide documentation that supports the rating for item 10

This item is rated as a(n) _____ because: _____
