



NC DEPARTMENT OF  
**HEALTH AND  
HUMAN SERVICES**

# Permanency Planning Services Track Training: A Job Aid for Supervisors

## Division of Social Services

# Permanency Planning Services Track Training: A Job Aid for Supervisors

The Permanency Planning Services Track Training is designed to provide an overview of the roles and responsibilities of a Permanency Planning Services worker in working with children, families, relatives, kin, and resource parents, including placement considerations, preparing for, and achieving permanence, and adoption.

## Day 1

- Purpose and Legal Basis
- Overview of Permanency Planning Services
- Roles and Responsibilities
- Case Transfer
- Reasonable Efforts
- Family-Centered Practice
- Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging
- Indian Child Welfare Act
- Crucial Conversations
- Family Engagement

## Day 2

- Safety and Risk
- Protective Factors and Capabilities
- Assessing
- Using SDM Tools when Assessing Safety and Risk
- Harm and Worry Statements
- Interviewing
- Trauma-Informed Care
- Permanency Plans and Concurrent Planning
- Preparing for Permanence

## Day 3

- Attachment
- Family Time
- Shared Parenting
- Working with Relatives
- Relational and Cultural Permanence
- Relative Diligent Search

## Day 4

- Child and Family Teams
- Juvenile Court System
- Permanency Planning with Families
- Planning for Change and Stages of Change
- Permanency Planning Family Services Agreement
- Engaging Children and Youth

## Day 5

- Concurrent Planning
- Service Provision
- Quality Contacts
- Worker Safety
- Preparing for Permanence
- Loss and Grief
- Engaging Youth in Permanency Planning

## Day 6

- Working with Relatives
- Placement with Relatives
- Placement Decisions
- Placement Stability
- Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard

## Day 7

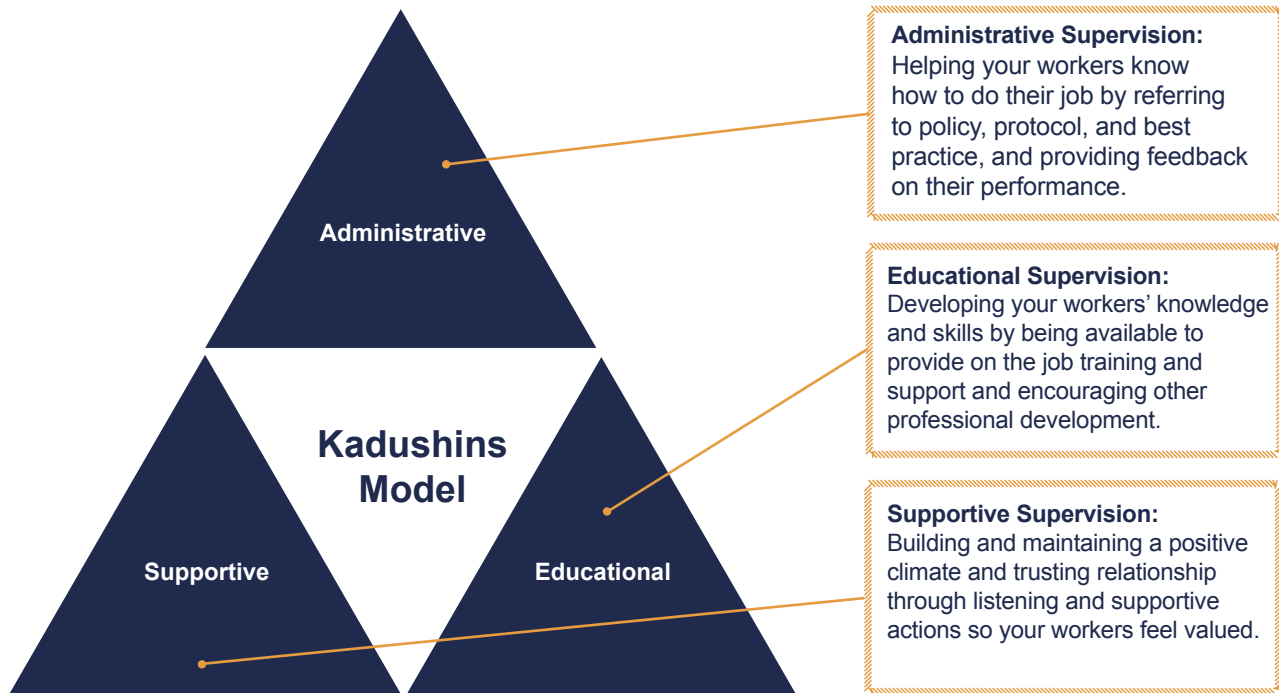
- Placement with Relatives
- ICPC
- Monitoring the Family Services Agreement
- Critical Thinking to Evaluate Progress
- Adequate Progress, Lack of Progress, and No Progress
- Achieving Permanency

## Day 8

- Adoption Overview
- Termination of Parental Rights
- The Adoption Process
- Finalizing an Adoption
- Documentation
- Considerations for Worker Safety
- Worker Wellness and Self-Care

## A Model for Supervision

Supervisors are the gateway to child welfare practice. They affect the quality and effectiveness of casework practice, influence agency culture, and directly correlate to staff retention. A supervisor’s role with training is to promote the transfer of learning from the training classroom to the work with children and families. New workers must practice their newly acquired skills on the job and receive feedback on their performance. Supervisors should master skills, knowledge, and capacity in three areas:



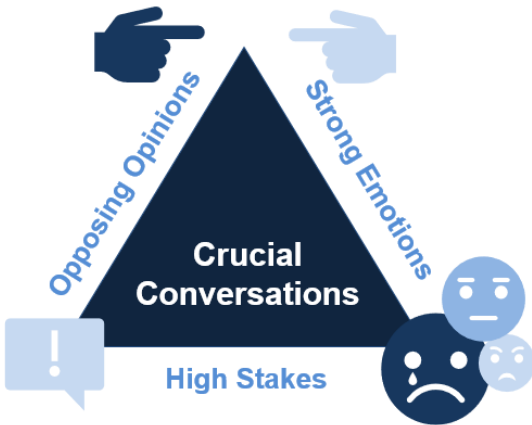
## Supervisor Support for Transfer of Learning

Below are some key concepts taught in the Permanency Planning Track Training that support worker’s skill development. Content is followed by guidance on how supervisors can support the transfer of learning process for that specific topic. The North Carolina Practice Standards provide the behaviors for how workers successfully partner with children, families, and providers. Supervisors parallel the Essential Functions of the Practice Standards as they successfully support their workers.



## Communicating Essential Function

### Crucial Conversations



Crucial conversations are conversations that are:

- High stakes
- Have opposing opinions
- Elicit strong emotions

## Communicating Essential Function

### Supportive

Ask your worker to identify conversations that did not go well and how they could have utilized crucial conversation strategies to improve that interaction.

Coach them through planning their next crucial conversation.

Celebrate their success and provide additional support as needed.

### Educational

During a staff meeting, have a new worker and a seasoned worker teach the concepts of crucial conversations.

Have your worker facilitate group discussions on what types of conversations are high stakes with opposing opinions and strong emotions. Then, ask them to facilitate a discussion about crucial conversation strategies that could be used in these instances.

Conduct role plays where your staff practice crucial conversations.

### Administrative

Support your worker in identifying when crucial conversations arise in their casework.

Use crucial conversations language to discuss policy requirements that align with the crucial conversations framework, such as placement or permanency plan changes, CFT meeting conflict, or when progress is lacking on a case plan.

Provide feedback on their ability to use crucial conversation skills. Model the use of the crucial conversations framework with your worker.

## Engaging Essential Function

### Authentically Engaging Children and Youth

Acting as the legal custodian for children in foster care requires social workers to manage many responsibilities. To carry out these responsibilities well, social workers must build a foundational knowledge of many aspects of child development and develop a personal understanding of the children on their caseload. Social workers have the following responsibilities with children and youth:

Ensuring safety and proper care

Assessing and attending to medical and mental health needs, such as making referrals to specialists as needed

Meeting the child or youth's educational needs

Maintaining the child or youth's family connections

Ensuring the child or youth has normalcy and placement providers adhere to the RPPS requirements

Considering the child or youth's culture in placement, case planning, and other case decisions

Working with the child or youth to develop the life skills that are needed for a successful transition to adulthood

Healing and managing grief and loss

Documenting the child or youth's life through Life Books

### Supervision Strategies to Support Authentically Engaging Children and Youth

#### Supportive

Ask your worker how they plan to authentically engage children and youth. Provide tips and support as needed.

Observe how your staff engages children and youth and provide feedback. Celebrate strengths and develop plans around opportunities. Provide support and follow-up.

#### Educational

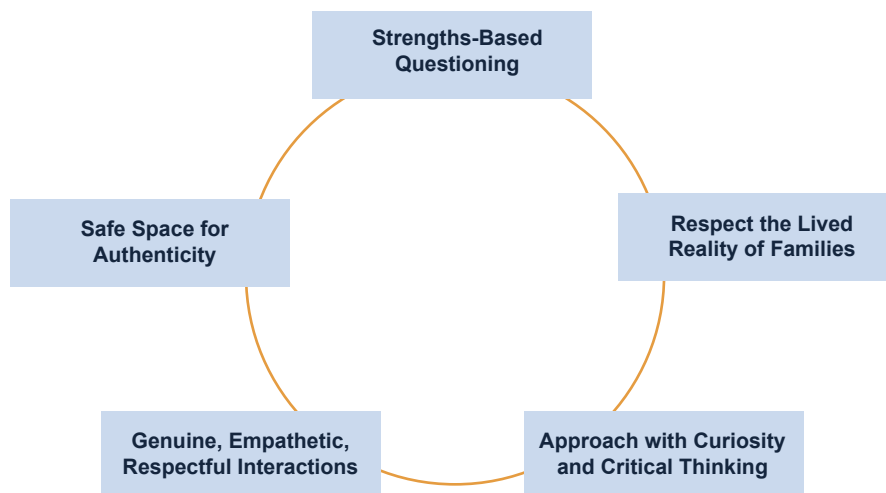
In a staff meeting, incorporate an educational activity and discussion component about social worker responsibilities with children and youth. This is an opportunity to take a deeper dive into how all your workers can fulfill their duties in a manner that authentically engages children and youth.

#### Administrative

Review the social worker's responsibilities with children and youth with your new worker. Highlight that making decisions without the child or youth's voice can lead to harm. Stress the importance of engaging each child or youth differently based on discovering what is important to them and their specific circumstances.

## Narrative Interviewing

Narrative interviewing keeps the family at the center of the interview, giving the family member the freedom to express themselves in their own words, maintaining ownership of their experiences, while helping to get the information and context needed to make well-informed assessment decisions. With narrative interviewing, more of the context and integrity of their experiences are apparent, and family members will not feel the pressure to provide prompted responses to the questions asked to get the information needed to assess families.



## Supervision Strategies to Support Engaging in Interviewing

### Supportive

Ask your worker how they plan to authentically engage children and youth. Provide tips and support as needed.

Observe how your staff engages children and youth and provide feedback. Celebrate strengths and develop plans around opportunities. Provide support and follow-up.

### Educational

Promote your worker's skills in identifying strengths in a problem situation, exploring the past, finding, and using expectations for the problem, facilitating a positive vision of the future, scaling questions, encouraging commitment, and developing action steps.

Provide education and discussion in supervision and team meetings on how trauma impacts behavior, promoting skills that acknowledge the individual's feelings and convey belief in their experience.

### Administrative

Review your worker's contacts and other case documentation. Assess for evidence of the use of open-ended questions and narrative interviewing techniques. Assess the use of Safety-Organized Practice tools to support the interview process, such as Three-Column Mapping or Three Houses.

Confirm that documentation reflects an acknowledgment of strengths and sensitivity to trauma and feelings of shame.

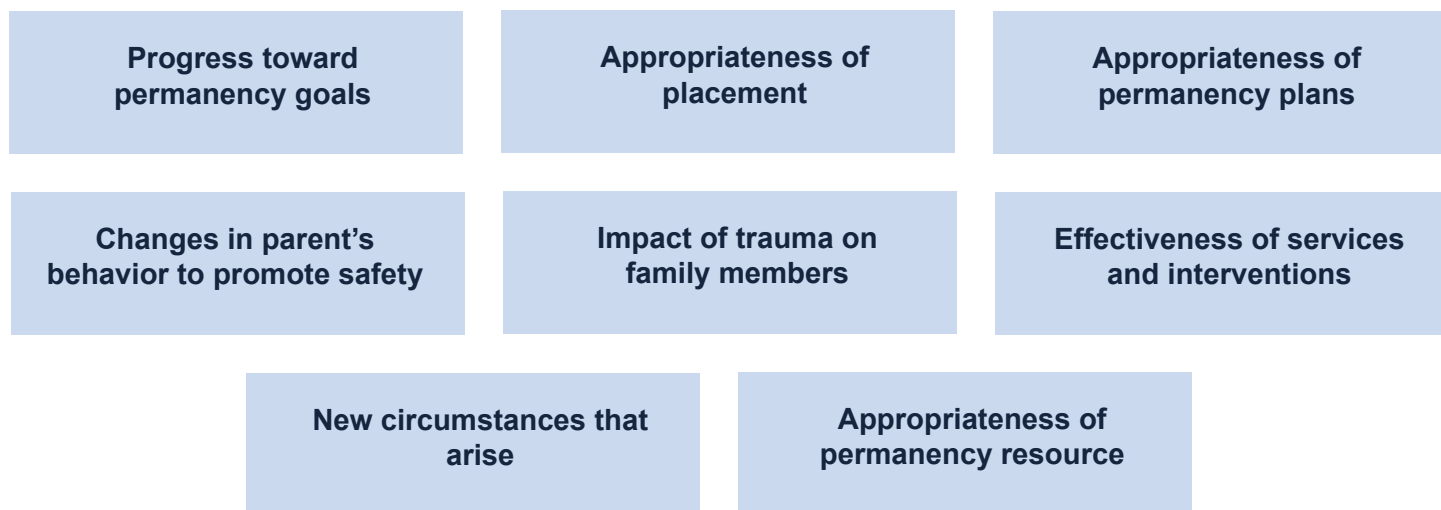
Develop verbiage with your worker that is reflective of their qualitative efforts with families and can be used in documentation and planning.



## Assessing Essential Function

### Assessing in Permanency Planning Services

Many aspects of a family's life must be assessed within the case process to ensure a thorough and holistic assessment. A comprehensive approach assumes that the different components of a family's life are interconnected and intertwined. Exploration of all aspects of a family's life supports a full picture of what is happening and where supports lie to resolve areas of concern.



### Supervision Strategies to Support Assessing and Looking Beyond the Behavior

#### Supportive

As part of the parallel process and to support staff, when performance issues arise with your worker, look beyond the behavior to understand the underlying causes. Assess what daily stressors, ongoing stress, individual characteristics, and trauma (including systemic oppression) may be the root cause of the concern. Provide appropriate support.

#### Educational

Inquire about opportunities to assess behavioral change when parents are not actively parenting.

Coach them through providing parents with more opportunities to demonstrate behavioral change.

Follow up to see how they are incorporating opportunities for parents to demonstrate behavioral change and provide feedback on their skills to assess behavioral change.

#### Administrative

Perform a case review, assessing for objective and behaviorally specific documentation.

Confirm your worker is accessing information from various sources to provide a holistic assessment.

Support your worker in promoting a balanced, equitable, and fair synthesis of information. Check for bias and realistic expectations.

## Planning Essential Function

### Permanency and Concurrent Planning

**Legal Permanence:** a legally established relationship through reunification, custody, adoption, or guardianship, or a child’s relationship with a parenting adult as recognized by law.

**Relational Permanence:** an emotional attachment between the child and caretakers and other family members and kin or recognizing the many important long-term relationships that help a child feel loved and connected.

**Cultural Permanence:** a continuous connection to family, tradition, race, ethnicity, culture, language, and religion.

### Concurrent Planning: Different Road, Same Destination

**Concurrent planning** is like offering multiple roads to the same destination. If done well, the permanent plan put into place provides an avenue to these outcomes. If we are intentional about supporting children and families to build connections, maintain ties to their culture, and build relationships, children can have access to their history and ties to their family and community regardless of the permanency plan that is chosen. Case planning activities required for one plan will also promote the other. Part of the art of concurrent planning is understanding the “both/and” of permanency. Children need access to their parents, even when they are not returning home. Those stories, history, and relational geography are crucial to a child healing from the trauma of separation, even when they may not have long-lasting ties to their parent. The goal at the end of each permanency outcome is a resilient child who has access to their story and legal, relational, emotional, and cultural permanence.

### Supervision Strategies to Support Permanency Planning

#### Supportive

Support your worker in separating their feelings from permanent plan decision-making and case progression.

Plan and practice crucial conversations that will arise when families and placement providers’ actions do not support the identified permanent plan.

Discuss the concept of concurrent planning with the “both/and” mentality, exploring ways that task activities support both permanent and concurrent plans, even when it is not apparent.

#### Educational

Discuss permanency with your worker. Add to their understanding of legal, relational, and cultural permanence.

Support your worker in building language about the concept of permanence. Observe your staff explaining permanency to families and placement providers. Coach staff through a thorough explanation that includes the family or placement provider’s role in permanence.

#### Administrative

Assess how your worker monitors efforts across all aspects of permanency (legal, relational, and cultural).

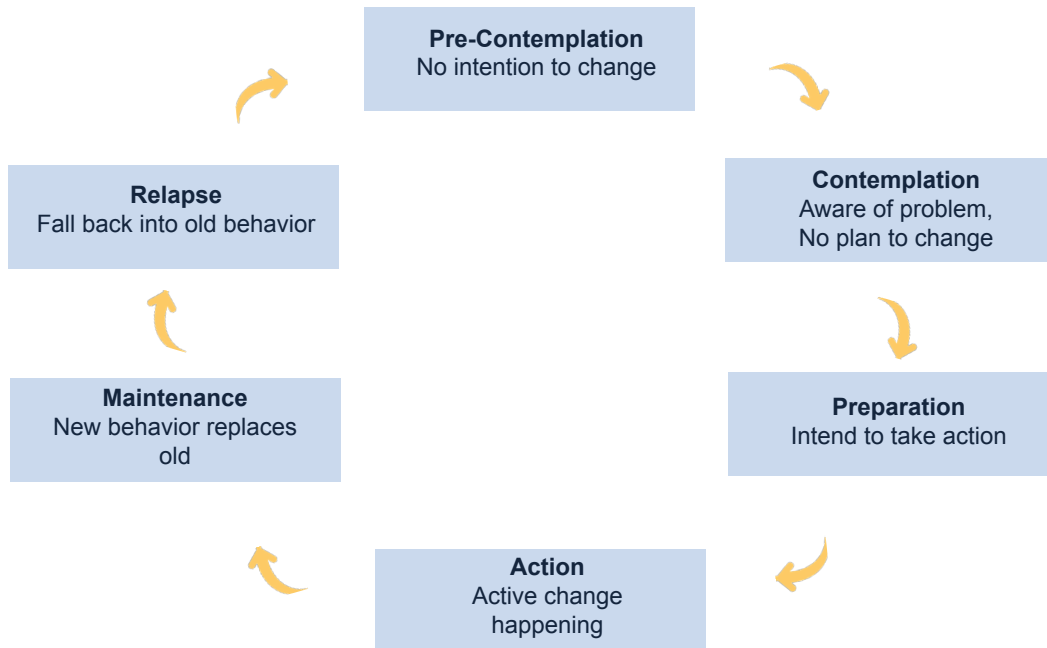
Confirm that your worker considers the impact of case decisions and planning on all aspects of permanency, not just the legal aspects.

Assess your worker’s efforts at cultivating a robust Child and Family Team that engages the family’s safety and support network. Ask how they might build a team if the parents and youth indicate they have no supportive people.



## Stages of Change

The process of change is not linear, and it looks different for each family and everyone within a family. Different moments within the change journey require different considerations, engagement skills, and support.



## Supervision Strategies to Support Planning with the Stages of Change

### Supportive

Discuss stages of change and the balance of accountability and support often during supervision.

When approaching a concern that must be addressed with your worker, model a parallel process by ensuring you demonstrate high accountability and support and doing with your worker.

### Educational

Use the language of the stages of change and the balance of accountability and support in supervision with your worker.

In supervision or team meetings, conduct an activity that offers an opportunity to consider different case planning actions and where they may fall on the doing to, doing for, and doing with continuum.

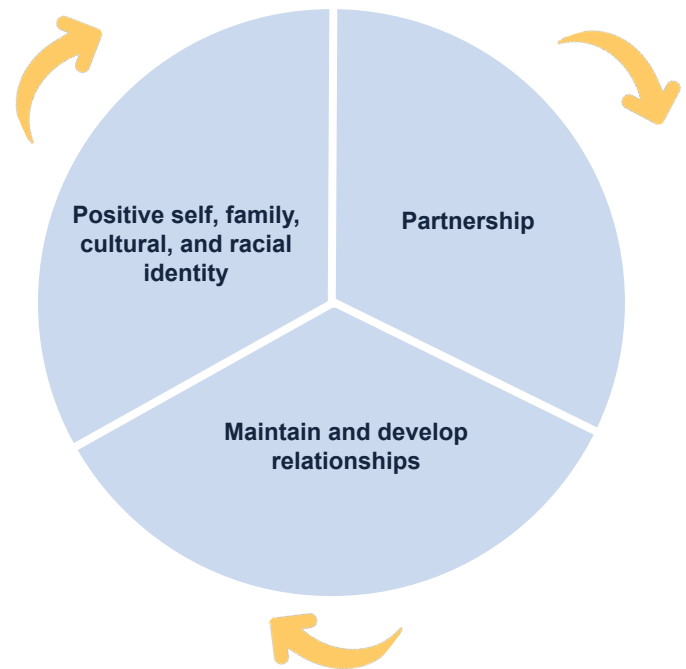
### Administrative

Assess your worker's documentation of the change process. Review for documentation of evidence of behavioral change. Confirm expected change is incremental and realistic. Highlight non-judgmental language that may describe the stage of change.

Assess the balance of support and accountability within case plans. Consider the accountability and supportive activities listed in case plans and assess whether there is a balance of high accountability and high support. Assess whether your worker is doing with children and families.

## Family Time and Shared Parenting

Family Time and Shared Parenting are tools for permanence. What happens in Family Time and Shared Parenting directly links families to the permanency process. Family Time is an opportunity to connect the dots for parents and to support them in practicing new ways of being in a relationship with their children. Not only can Family Time work to support behavior change to address the reasons for removal, but it is also a crucial time to heal disrupted attachments. Shared Parenting benefits the child, their parents, the resource parents, and the agency. Shared parenting makes a significant contribution to lessening the trauma, for both the child and their family, associated with out-of-home placement.



## Supervision Strategies to Support Planning in Family Time and Shared Parenting

### Supportive

Assist your worker in exploring and managing their thoughts and emotions about Family Time and Shared Parenting, especially when a visit does not go well or when your worker struggles to see the value of Family Time for a family.

Model a shared decision-making approach to case management, where collaboration is used in brainstorming and solutioning. Connect these case management strategies to Shared Parenting. Provide opportunities to shadow peers to supplement learning on Shared Parenting strategies.

### Educational

Discuss the benefits of Shared Parenting and Family Time with your worker. Share available agency resources or strategies that could support or provide a solution to barriers.

Support your worker in integrating advocacy for Family Time into their practice.

Observe your worker conducting a Shared Parenting meeting. Assess how your worker promotes partnering with the family, maintaining and developing relationships for the child, and creating positive self, family, cultural, and racial identity through Shared Parenting.

### Administrative

Assess your worker's use of Family Time.

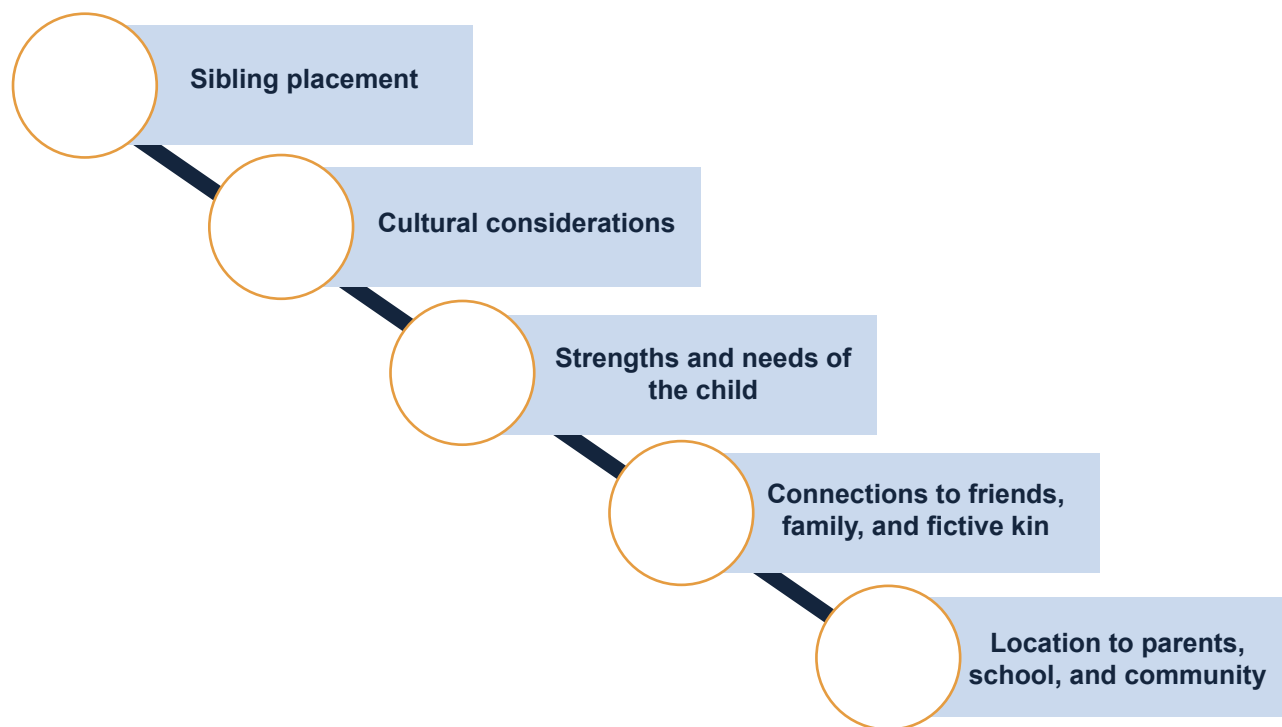
- Are they utilizing it as a tool for permanence?
- Are they honoring Family Time as a right, not a privilege, for families?
- Have they incorporated best practices?

Observe your worker as they prepare prospective resource parents for shared parenting. Assess how your worker promotes partnering with the family, maintaining and developing relationships for the children, and creating positive self, family, cultural, and racial identity through shared parenting. Provide support and feedback.

## Implementing Essential Function

### Placement Considerations

Placement into out-of-home care is designed to be a temporary intervention that helps address immediate safety concerns while permitting child welfare agencies the time needed to assess and address the safety conditions that brought children into care. When removal from the home is required, DSS must arrange for and maintain a single, stable, safe placement within the child's own community. Engaging the family in the placement decision increases stability and ultimately promotes safety, permanency, and well-being.



### Supervision Strategies to Support Placement Considerations

#### Supportive

Support your worker in making placement decisions when conditions are less than optimal. Provide guidance in prioritizing the placement considerations as needed.

#### Educational

Through case conferencing or direct observation, assess how well your worker engages the family's safety network. Consider their use of open-ended, strength-based, solution-focused questions.

Provide tips and suggestions that educate on utilizing the circle of safety.

#### Administrative

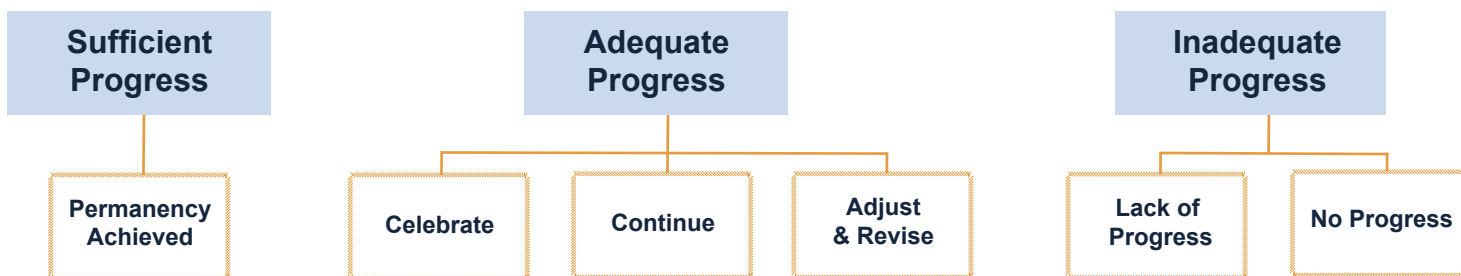
Observe and provide feedback on the placement process. Assess if your worker prioritizes and advocates for the least restrictive, least intrusive placement.

Coach your worker as they understand and prioritize placement considerations for the children and families they work with.

## Evaluating Progress

The evaluation of progress seeks to answer the question, “Has there been necessary behavioral change that promotes safety and reduces risk for the identified areas of concern to achieve the permanency outcome?” Progress can be summarized into several categories:

- Sufficient progress indicates that families have successfully met all objectives and/or significant progress in ongoing programs.
- Adequate progress means that families are actively participating in programs, pursuing objectives, and making significant progress.
- Inadequate progress, or lack of progress, indicates that families have partially participated in pursuing objectives and some progress has been made.
- Inadequate progress, or no progress, is indicated by refusal to become involved in programs or an exhibited minimal level of participation and making little or no progress toward ameliorating needs.



## Supervision Strategies to Support Evaluating Progress

### Supportive

Assess your worker’s thoughts, feelings, and biases around assessing progress with families. Consider whether their emotional connection to the case is influencing their assessment. Discuss how bias plays a role in interpreting behaviors and the change process.

### Educational

Review harm and worry statements for a case assigned to your new worker. Assess how they plan to gather information on progress through child interviews, parent interviews, collateral contacts, record reviews, and home visits for this specific case. Identify your worker’s strengths and provide guidance through this process.

### Administrative

Review with your worker the information they gathered on the case while monitoring progress.

- Ask them to evaluate whether there was sufficient, adequate, or inadequate progress.
- Inquire about barriers and what reasonable and diligent efforts were made to remove barriers.
- Assess your worker’s understanding of policy timeframes for achieving permanency.
- Provide feedback that supports the development of the next steps with the parents by guiding the worker to steps that remove barriers and achieve permanence.

## Achieving Permanency

### Legal Permanency Options

Reunification

Guardianship

Custody

Another Planned  
Permanent Living  
Arrangement (APPLA)

Reinstatement of Parental  
Rights (RPR)

Adoption

### Supervision Strategies to Support Achieving Permanency

#### Supportive

Discuss with your staff how to prepare children, youth, parents, relatives, and permanency resource providers for legal, relational, and cultural permanence.

Celebrate your worker's strengths in achieving legal permanence.

Use coaching to provide support when there are barriers to achieving permanency.

Support your worker in managing their emotions about transitions in the life of the case.

#### Educational

Review each of the legal permanency options, including the policy requirements to achieve the permanency options. Fill in any gaps in understanding.

Provide on-the-job training and education on the Permanency Planning Services worker's roles and responsibilities.

Through case conferencing and observation, assess how your worker builds relational connections, empowers youth, maintains consistency in building self-efficacy, and utilizes a person-centered approach.

#### Administrative

Assess a case your worker has that is transitioning to legal permanency.

- Are they following policy requirements and timeframes to transition the case?
- Has your worker completed the required tasks, forms, and documentation?
- Have they considered cultural and relational permanence?
- Have they assessed the considerations for working with the family to transition?
- Have they considered barriers to this transition and post-permanency support?

## Reinforcing Best Practices



### North Carolina Practice Model

- Demonstrate and share how you incorporate the Practice Model into your practice.
- Observe staff and provide feedback on their implementation of the Practice Standards and Safety Organized Practice.
- Encourage your worker to complete the Practice Standards Self Assessment.
- Develop plans around strengths and opportunities to enhance their practice.



### DEIB

- Ask your worker to share how they address and ensure equity in permanency planning.
- Support your worker in identifying cases where there are concerns for equity and disproportionality, and help your worker to address these concerns.
- Share information and organize presentations about community-based services that are culturally relevant to the populations they serve.



### Trauma-Informed Care

- Have your worker discuss the impact of trauma on child development and behaviors, and provide feedback.
- Provide information about trauma-informed community resources available to parents, children, relatives, resource parents, and others.
- Have your worker reflect on how trauma may be influencing decision-making, and behaviors in the context of their work and interactions with others. Share how you plan to support them.



### Quality Contacts

- Have your team review the components of quality contacts in a staff meeting. Have them provide tips and suggestions.
- Observe your worker during a caseworker contact and provide feedback on their strengths and areas of opportunities.



### Worker Safety

- Be clear about any department expectations related to safety and on-call practices.
- Provide your worker with any agency-specific policies related to worker safety.
- Support and address any impacts after there has been a threat to a worker's safety.



### Self-Care

- Utilize Reflective Supervision to check-in with your worker about their intake reports and the circumstances to which they have been exposed.
- Review your worker's self-care plan. Assess where they are strong and where they have barriers.
- Coach your worker to discover strategies for themselves to minimize the barriers in their self-care plan.