

VI. SERVICES TO REUNIFY FAMILIES

POLICY VI-A: OUT-OF-HOME PLACEMENT CRITERIA

~~7/2019~~01/20205

The state of Arkansas is not a voluntary placement state. The removal of a child from his or her home must occur pursuant to a judicial order placing custody of the child with the Department. After the Department removes the child or the court grants custody of the child to the Department, the child shall be placed in a licensed or approved foster home, shelter, ~~or~~ facility, or an exempt child welfare agency as defined at A.C.A. § 9-28-402.

When a child is in the custody of the Department of Human Services, DCFS shall ensure that the out-of-home placement is in the best interest of the child, is the least restrictive possible, is matched to the child's physical and therapeutic needs (e.g., caretakers have the skills and training sufficient to meet the child's individual needs), and is close in proximity to the child's parents and the child's school. All efforts to place a child within Arkansas shall be thoroughly explored and documented before consideration is given to out-of-state placement.

If the biological parent expresses a preference for placing a child in a home of the same or similar religious background to the biological parents, the Division will place the child with a family that meets the genetic parent's religious background. If a family with the same or similar religious background is not available, the Division will place the child with a family of a different religious background but that is knowledgeable and appreciative of the child's religious background.

When it is in the best interest of each of the children, the Department shall attempt to place siblings together while in out-of-home placements. Siblings include those individuals who would be considered a sibling under state/tribal law if it were not for the disruption in parental rights, such as a termination of parental rights or death of a parent. When it is in the best interest of each of the children, the Department shall attempt to place together infants with minor mothers who are in foster care.

The state shall check all appropriate child abuse and neglect registries for information on any prospective foster or adoptive parent and any household member age fourteen (14) and up living in the home before the prospective parent may be finally approved for placement of that child. This will be done regardless of whether foster care maintenance payments or adoption assistance payments are to be made on behalf of the child. The state shall also request any other state in which a prospective parent or any household member age fourteen (14) and up has resided in the preceding five (5) years to check any child abuse and neglect registry it maintains for such information. The state will comply with any request received from another state to check its own child abuse and neglect registry.

In addition, a child in the custody of the Department shall not be placed in an approved home of any foster or adoptive parent unless all household members eighteen (18) and one-half years of age and older, excluding children in foster care, have had an Arkansas State Police Criminal Record Check.

A child in the custody of the Department shall also not be placed in an approved home of any foster or adoptive parent unless all household members eighteen (18) and one-half years of age and older, excluding children in foster care, have a fingerprint-based FBI Criminal Background Check.

No child shall be placed in the home of a foster parent where a records check reveals a felony conviction for child abuse or neglect, for spousal abuse or domestic battery, for a crime against children (including child pornography), or a crime involving violence, including rape, sexual assault, or homicide. No child shall be placed in the home of a foster parent if the record check reveals a criminal conviction for physical assault, battery, or a drug related offense, if the offense was committed within the past five (5) years. The placement decision shall be based on an individual assessment of the child's needs.

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In all custodial placements by DCFS, preferential consideration will be given to an adult relative over a nonrelated caregiver if the relative caregiver meets all relevant child protection standards and it is in the best interest of the child to be placed with the relative caregiver. All potential out-of-state relative placements will be given the same opportunity as in-state relative placements to choose to become foster homes.

In order to assist in placing the child with an appropriate relative, the court will order the parent(s) to provide the necessary information to the Department to locate appropriate relatives:

- A. The names, addresses, and phone numbers of any relatives who may be placement resources for the child;
- B. The names, addresses, and phone numbers and other identifying information on any putative father(s) of the child;
- C. Any information regarding possible membership or descent from an Indian tribe;
- D. Information necessary to determine financial eligibility for services or foster care.

If the relative meets all relevant child protection standards and it is in the child's best interest to be placed with the relative caregiver, the FSW shall discuss with the relative the following two (2) options for placement of the child in the relative's home:

- A. The relative becoming a DCFS provisional foster home prior to becoming a regular DCFS foster home (if the relative opts to have his or her home opened as a provisional foster home, the relative shall not be paid a board payment until the relative is opened as a regular foster home); or,
- B. The relative obtaining legal custody of the child.

For more information on these placement options, refer to Policy VI-B: Consideration of Relatives and Fictive Kin for Children in Foster Care.

Fictive kin to the child may be an appropriate placement option for a child provided the individual meets all relevant child protection standards and it is in the child's best interest to be placed with fictive kin. Fictive kin are defined as persons not related by blood or marriage but who have a strong, positive emotional tie to the child, and have a positive role in the child's life such as, godparents, neighbors, or family friends. If an appropriate fictive kin is identified as a placement option for a child, the FSW shall discuss with the fictive kin the following two (2) options for placement of the child in the fictive kin's home:

- A. The fictive kin becoming a DCFS provisional foster home prior to becoming a regular DCFS foster home (if the fictive kin opts to have his or her home opened as a provisional foster home, the fictive kin shall not be paid a board payment until the fictive kin is opened as a regular foster home); or,
- B. The fictive kin obtaining legal custody of the child.

The child shall remain in a licensed or approved foster home, shelter, or facility, or an exempt child welfare agency as defined at A.C.A. § 9-28-402(12), until:

- A. The relative or fictive kin's home is opened as a provisional foster home or regular foster home; or,
- B. The court grants custody of the child to the relative or fictive kin after a written approved home study is presented to the court.

Placement or custody of a child in the home of a relative or other person shall not relieve the Department of its responsibility to actively implement the goal of the case.

The court may order a child to remain in a placement if the court finds the placement is in the best interest of the child (with the exception that the court shall not order a child to remain in a placement in a foster home that has been closed or suspended by a child placement agency) after hearing evidence from all parties. The court shall not specify a particular provider for placement or family services, when DHS is the payer or provider; however, the court may order a child to be placed into a licensed approved placement (i.e., no child shall be placed in a foster home that has been closed or suspended by a child placement agency) after a hearing where the court makes a finding that it is in the best interest of the child based on bona fide consideration of evidence and recommendations from all the parties.

If the court orders a child to be placed into a licensed approved placement as outlined above, a IV-E eligible child may still remain IV-E claimable. However, if the court orders a child into a specific placement and it is determined that the court did not make a finding based on bona fide consideration of evidence and recommendations from all parties, a IV-E eligible child's IV-E claimability may be affected.

If the health or welfare of a child is in immediate danger while in a court-ordered placement, the Division may immediately remove the child from the court-ordered placement. If the Division must move a child from a court-ordered placement due to the health or welfare of a child being in immediate danger, the Division shall notify all parties within twenty-four (24) hours of the change in placement. Regarding this type of placement change, a hearing may be requested by a party to the case, and the hearing shall be held within five (5) business days of receiving the request.

In all cases in which family services are ordered, the court shall determine the parent's, guardian's, or custodian's ability to pay, in whole or in part, for these services. This determination and the evidence supporting it shall be made in writing in the court order ordering family services. If the court determines that the parent, guardian, or custodian is able to pay, in whole or part, for the services, the court shall enter a written order setting forth the amounts the parent, guardian, or custodian can pay for the family services ordered and ordering the parent, guardian, or custodian to pay the amount periodically to the provider from whom family services are received. If a child is committed to a youth services center or detained in a juvenile detention facility and is covered by private health insurance, the court may order the parent or guardian to provide information on the health insurance coverage (including a copy of the health insurance policy and pharmacy card when available) to the detention or youth services center.

A child of a parent who is in DHS custody, is also considered a dependent juvenile and is eligible to receive foster care maintenance payments and is deemed to be a recipient of aid to families with dependent children. Titles XIX and XX services will be available to the child in the state in which the child resides.

Children who are in the custody of the Department shall be allowed trial home placements with parents, for a period not to exceed sixty (60) days, except as approved by the Department, and in any event not to exceed six (6) months. This includes trial home placements with the juvenile's parent(s) from whom custody was removed (or other person from whom custody was removed). The Department values child safety and will not place any child in trial home placement unless safety factors have been mitigated and sixty (60) days is the intended maximum trial home placement. Use of trial home placement for a period exceeding sixty (60) days will be reserved for extenuating circumstances. At the end of the sixty (60) days, unless an extension is requested by the Department for good cause, the court shall either place custody of the child with the parent, or the Department shall return the child to a licensed or approved foster home, shelter, or facility, or an exempt child welfare agency as defined in A.C.A. § 9-28-402.

When a child leaves the custody of the Department and the court grants custody to the parent or another person, the Department is no longer the legal custodian of the child, even if the Juvenile Division of Circuit Court retains jurisdiction.

POLICY VI-B: CONSIDERATION OF RELATIVES AND FICTIVE KIN FOR CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE

018/20203

The Division of Children and Family Services (DCFS) believes that safe and appropriate relatives and fictive kin are the best placements for children who must be removed from their homes to ensure safety. Research confirms that children in foster care fare much better when placed with relatives and fictive kin than in traditional foster homes or other placement settings. Placement with relatives and fictive kin helps to minimize trauma, improve well-being, and increase permanency for children in foster care. DCFS will strive to ensure that a child's first placement is with a relative or fictive kin if at all possible.

"Relative" means a person within the fifth degree of kinship to the child or at least one of the children in a sibling group, including step-siblings and half-siblings, by virtue of blood or adoption. In all custodial placements by the Department of Human Services in foster care or adoption, preferential consideration shall be given to an adult relative over a nonrelated caregiver if the relative caregiver meets all relevant child protection standards and it is in the best interest of the child to be placed with the relative caregiver.

When considering placement options for a child in foster care, relative includes non-custodial parents as parents are presumed to be the most appropriate caregiver for a child unless evidence to the contrary is presented. When a child enters foster care, the Department will immediately evaluate the appropriateness of non-custodial parents for trial home placement of their child.

When a non-custodial parent is not an immediate placement option, the Department will seek other relatives as potential caregivers in an effort to preserve the bond between the child and family. -If these provisions are met, the Department shall will discuss with a the relative (who is not the non-custodial parent) the following two (2) options for placement of the juvenile in the relative's home:

- A. The relative becoming a DHS provisional foster home prior to becoming a regular foster home; or,
- B. The relative obtaining legal custody of the juvenile.

Per A.C.A. § 9-27-354, placement or custody of a juvenile in the home of a relative shall not relieve the Department of its responsibility to actively implement the goal of the case.

"Fictive kin" means a person not related to a child by blood or marriage, but who has a strong, positive, emotional tie to a child and has a positive role in a child's life. If there are no available ~~and~~/or appropriate relatives within the fifth degree of kinship to the child, then DCFS ~~will~~shall attempt to identify appropriate fictive kin, to include people beyond the fifth degree of kinship by virtue of blood or adoption, as a placement option for the child. If the fictive kin meet all relevant child protection standards and it is in the best interest of the child to be placed with the fictive kin, the Department shall discuss with the fictive kin the following two (2) options for placement of the juvenile in the relative's home:

- A. The fictive kin becoming a DHS provisional foster home prior to becoming a regular foster home; or,
- B. The fictive kin obtaining legal custody of the juvenile.

The juvenile shall remain in a licensed or approved foster home, shelter, or facility, or an exempt child welfare agency until ~~the a trial home visit occurs with a non-custodial parent,~~ a relative or fictive kin's home is opened as a provisional or regular foster home or the court grants custody of the juvenile to the relative or fictive kin after a written approved home study is presented to the court.

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If the relative or fictive kin chooses to obtain legal custody of the juvenile, a protective services case must be opened on the child and a case plan developed to establish permanency for the child. The Division must provide services similar to the services that would have been provided if the child was placed in foster care, and the case plan must address these services. For example, the child's health, education, and ~~for~~ counseling needs should be addressed in the case plan. Relatives and fictive kin have the option of obtaining permanent custody or guardianship if all efforts toward reunification are exhausted ~~and/or~~ to achieve case plan goals for permanency. If the court grants permanent custody, or guardianship is granted, the protective services case will be closed.

If Termination of Parental Rights (TPR) is an option for the case, the relative or fictive kin is eligible to adopt the child and can receive services identified in Policy VIII-I: Adoption Subsidy and related procedures, if the child is eligible.

PROCEDURE VI-B1: Trial Home Visit with Non-Custodial Parents

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The Family Service Worker will:

- A. Immediately ask the child, child's parent(s), or legal guardian(s) from whom custody was removed, and any available relatives or fictive kin to provide information on non-custodial parent(s) to include, as available:
 - 1) The names, addresses, last known address, last known place of employment, and phone numbers of the non-custodial parent(s);
 - 2) The names, addresses, phone numbers, and other identifying information of any relative or collateral who could assist in location of the non-custodial parent(s);
 - 3) Information pertaining to stability of the non-custodial parent(s) such as:
 - a. History of and any current substance misuse issues;
 - b. History of and any current domestic violence issues;
 - c. History of and any current mental or behavioral health issues;
 - d. Current or previous restraining orders or protection orders with child or immediate family members.
- B. Collaborate with the Resource Worker to assess appropriateness of the non-custodial parent.
 - 1) For initial, immediate placement the following must be conducted and considered:
 - a. Verification that the individual is the non-custodial parent;
 - b. An expedited Child Maltreatment Central Registry Check (via CFS-316: Request for Arkansas Child Maltreatment Central Registry Check);
 - c. An expedited State Police Criminal Record check (via CFS-342: State Police Criminal Record Check);
 - d. A Vehicle Safety Program Check (i.e., driving points);
 - e. A Lexis Nexis search;
 - f. A Court Connect search for applicable counties;
 - g. A visual inspection of the home guided by the Non-Custodial Parent Information and Questionnaire and also to include:

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- i. Follow up on immediate concerns identified by child or collaterals during the removal;
 - ii. Review of information gathered during the visual inspection of the home;
 - iii. Assessment of how other children or adults in the home may affect the child being considered for placement;
 - iv. Assessment of how the child being considered for placement may impact the household members.
- 2) The following must also be submitted within two (2) weeks of placement (results do not have to be received in order to place with the non-custodial parent if there are no other health or safety concerns):
- a. FBI (non-state) Criminal Record Check if the non-custodial parent has lived or worked (if different) in another state in the last five (5) years;
 - b. Request for Child Maltreatment Central Registry check from any state in which the non-custodial parent has lived or worked (if different) for the past five (5) years.
- C. If placement with the non-custodial parent appears viable, interview the child, if age appropriate, to assess how the child may feel about placement with the non-custodial parent and make individualized placements on a case-by-case basis in the best interest of the child.
- D. If placement is viable:
- 1) Contact the OCC Attorney immediately if child is being moved from one Out-of-Home Placement to another and provide notice of the placement change to all other parties to the case as required by law and outlined in Policy VII-L: Changes in Out-of-Home Placement and related procedures if that placement was not considered to be a temporary placement (see Appendix I: Glossary).
 - 2) Provide the child's parent(s) with PUB-11: What Happens When Your Child and Family Are Involved with DCFS?
 - 3) Provide the non-custodial parent with PUB-15: A Relative's Guide to the Arkansas Child Welfare System.
 - 4) Place the child in the non-custodial parent's home and:
 - a) Ensure the non-custodial parent acknowledges they will not allow the alleged perpetrator access to the child that is not supervised by the Division until the investigation is complete and will not allow any contact with the alleged offender that is not approved or authorized by the Division or the court after the investigation is completed (if found true).
 - b) Document placement selection on the Case Plan by keying the "Plan Goals" and the "Needs/Svc" screens in the "Treatment" portion of the "Case Plan" section of CHRIS.
 - c) Assist the non-custodial parent in applying for benefits if appropriate, such as benefits under the Temporary Employment Assistance (TEA) Program or the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).
- E. Keep the Resource Worker informed of any changes to the child's need for a placement with the non-custodial parent and any other relevant information.
- F. Hold staffings, as needed, in accordance with Procedure IV-C1: Case Staffings and update the Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) Assessment and case plan.

The Resource Worker will:

- A. Process all necessary background checks by (see Procedure VII-C1: Background Check Processing for more information):
 - 1) Conducting an expedited Child Maltreatment Central Registry Check (via CFS-316: Request for Arkansas Child Maltreatment Central Registry Check);
 - 2) Conducting an expedited State Police Criminal Record check (via CFS-342: State Police Criminal Record Check);

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- 3) Submitting a Vehicle Safety Program (DMV) Check (driving record points will be computed in DCFS Central Office, and the results, including qualification or disqualification, will be forwarded to the Resource Worker for inclusion in the non-custodial parent's file);
- 4) Submitting a Non-state Criminal Record Check if the non-custodial parent has lived or worked (if different) in another state in the last five (5) years; and,
- 5) Submitting requests for Child Maltreatment Central Registry check from any state in which non-custodial parent has lived or worked (if different) for the past five (5) years.
- B. Conduct a visual inspection of the non-custodial parent's home as guided by the Non-Custodial Parent Information and Questionnaire.
- C. Keep the child's FSW informed of progress and any challenges associated with processing of the background checks.

The FSW and Resource Supervisors will:

- A. Conference with and support the FSW and Resource Worker as necessary.
- B. Review and approve placement with non-custodial parent.

PROCEDURE VI-B~~21~~: Provisional Foster Home Placement for Children in Foster Care

0201/202015

The Family Service Worker will:

- A. Ask the child's parent(s) or legal guardian(s) from whom custody was removed to provide information on appropriate relatives and fictive kin to include, as available (if not already provided at time of removal):
 - 1) The names, addresses, and phone numbers of any relatives or fictive kin who may serve as appropriate placement resources for the child;
 - 2) The names, addresses, phone numbers, and other identifying information of any putative father(s) of the child.
- B. Assist with completion of CFS-450: Prospective Provisional Foster Parent Information and Questionnaire as appropriate to the specific case ~~and~~/or local county procedures.
- C. Keep the Resource Worker informed of any changes to the child's need for a provisional placement and any other relevant information.
- D. Ensure that the Resource Worker conducts a review of the prospective provisional home to include:
 - 1) An expedited Child Maltreatment Central Registry Check (via CFS-316: Request for Arkansas Child Maltreatment Central Registry Check);
 - 2) An expedited State Police Criminal Record check (via CFS-342: State Police Criminal Record Check);
 - 3) A vehicle safety check; and,
 - 4) Submission of the ~~FBI~~ (non-state) ~~FBI~~ Criminal Record Check (~~FBI~~ results do not have to be received in order to open the provisional foster home, but results must be received and clear within six (6) months in order to make a determination as to whether to approve as a regular DCFS foster home).
 - 5) A visual inspection of the home (via CFS-446: In Home Consultation Visit Report).
- E. If the provisional foster home placement appears viable, interview the child, if age appropriate, to assess how the child may feel about placement with the relative and make individualized placements on a case-by-case basis in the best interest of the child.
- F. Collaborate with the Resource Worker to evaluate:
 - 1) How the other children and adults in the home will affect the successful development of a child in foster care; and,
 - 2) How the child in foster care will impact the other members of the home.

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- G. If, after the Resource Worker has completed all necessary steps to open the family as a provisional home (see below for more information), it is determined that placement with the family is in the best interest of the child:
- ~~1)~~ Arrange at least one (1) pre-placement visit for the child ~~before the initial placement and before any~~
 - ~~2)~~ ~~subsequent changes in placement if possible and appropriate if it is not the child's initial placement;~~
 - ~~1)~~
 - ~~3)~~ Contact the OCC Attorney immediately if child is being moved from one Out-of-Home Placement to
 - ~~4)~~ another ~~and provide notice of the placement change to all other parties to the case as required by law~~
~~and as outlined in (see Procedure Policy VII-KL: Changes in Out-of-Home Placement and related~~
~~procedures)~~ if that placement was not considered to be a temporary placement
 - ~~5)2)~~ (see Appendix I: Glossary);
 - ~~6)3)~~ Provide the child's parent(s) with PUB-11: What Happens When Your Child and Family Are Involved with DCFS;
 - ~~7)4)~~ Provide the prospective provisional foster family with PUB-15: A Relative's Guide to the Arkansas Child Welfare System;
 - ~~8)5)~~ Place the child in the provisional home and:
 - a) When a child is placed in a provisional foster home for a ~~seventy-two (72)~~ hours hold, ensure that the provisional foster parents acknowledge they will not allow the alleged perpetrator access to the child that is not supervised by the Division until the investigation is complete and will not allow any contact with the alleged offender that is not approved or authorized by the Division or the court after the investigation is completed (if found true);
 - b) Ensure that the provisional foster parents understand that they must work with their Resource Worker to complete any corrective actions necessary to bring the home into compliance with Minimum Licensing Standards and DCFS Policy within six (6) months ~~or their home will be closed and the child removed;~~
 - c) Document placement selection on the ~~CFS-6010~~ Case Plan by keying the "Plan Goals" and the "Needs/Svc" screens in the "Treatment" portion of the "Case Plan" section of CHRIS;
 - d) Assist the provisional foster parents in applying for benefits if appropriate. Until the provisional foster home is opened as a regular foster home, the relative ~~or~~ fictive kin may apply for and receive benefits for which the provisional foster parents may be entitled due to the placement of the child in the home, such as benefits under the Temporary Employment Assistance (TEA) Program or the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP);
 - e) Assess the situation with the Resource Worker and Supervisor(s) if the family does not come into compliance within six ~~(6)~~ months of the placement of the child in the home and recommend to OCC on how the case should proceed (i.e., remain in foster care or have a completed approved home study and recommend custody to the relative);
 - f) Collaborate with the Resource Worker to ensure that the relative(s) is completing the process for foster home approval. If the relative's home is not fully licensed as a foster home within six (6) months of the placement of the child in the home:
 - i. The Department shall remove the child from the relative's home and close the relative's provisional foster home and place child in an approved or licensed placement; or,
 - ii. The court shall remove custody from the Department and grant custody of the child to the relative.
 - I. Complete the ~~CFS-6024~~ Permanency Planning Hearing Court Report and submit to the FSW Supervisor for review and approval.
 - J. If approved by the FSW Supervisor, submit ~~the CFS-6024~~ Permanency Planning Hearing Court Report to the OCC attorney, CASA, and all other required parties within ~~fourteen (14)~~ days prior to any Permanency Planning Hearing scheduled for the case.

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- K. Hold staffings, as needed, in accordance with Procedure IV-C1: Case Staffings and update the Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) Assessment and case plan.
- L. Invite the Adoption Specialist to the staffing when appropriate.
- M. Conduct a staffing to discuss closure when appropriate.

The Resource Worker will:

- A. Assist with completion of CFS-450: Prospective Provisional Foster Parent Information and Questionnaire as appropriate to specific case ~~and~~/or local county procedures.
- B. Process all necessary background checks by (see Procedure VII-C1: Background Check Processing for more information):
 - 1) Conducting an expedited Child Maltreatment Central Registry Check (via CFS-316: Request for Arkansas Child Maltreatment Central Registry Check);
 - 2) Conducting an expedited State Police Criminal Record check (via CFS-342: State Police Criminal Record Check);
 - 3) Conducting a Vehicle Safety Program (DMV) Check (driving record points will be computed in DCFS Central Office, and the results, including qualification or disqualification, will be forwarded to the Resource Worker for inclusion in the applicant file; see Procedure VII-C1 for forms which must be completed); and,
 - 4) Submitting the FBI (non-state) Criminal Record Check (~~FBI~~ results do not have to be received in order to open the provisional foster home, but results must be received and clear within six (6) months in order to approve as a regular DCFS foster home).
- C. Complete~~ing~~ a visual inspection of the home ~~(via CFS-446: In Home Consultation Visit Report)~~. See Procedure VII-C2: In Home Consultation Visit for more information.
- D. Based on the results of the background checks listed above and the visual inspection of the home, begin the process for requesting any necessary Alternative Compliances or DCFS Policy Waivers, if applicable.
- E. Explain to the relative/fictive kin that, if opened as a provisional foster home, they will not receive a board payment until they are opened as a fully approved DCFS Foster Home which must occur within six (6) months of being opened as a provisional foster home.
- F. Explain to the relative/fictive kin other processes related to becoming a provisional and, ultimately, a regular DCFS foster home (see Policy VII: Development of Foster Homes and related procedures).
- G. Keep the child's FSW informed of progress ~~and/or~~ any challenges to opening the relative as a provisional foster home.
- H. Collaborate with the child's FSW to evaluate:
 - 1) How the other children and adults in the home will affect the successful development of a child in foster care; and,
 - 2) How the child in foster will impact the other members of the home.
- I. If the relative/fictive kin and relative/fictive kin's home are appropriate to open as a provisional foster home, complete CFS-452: Provisional Foster Home Verification and CFS-474: Provisional Foster Home Checklist with the family and file in the provider record.
- J. Enter a relative into CHRIS as a Provider opening two (2) placement services: Provisional (Relative) Placement (No Board) Service, and Foster Family Home Service. The Provisional (Relative) Placement (No Board) Service must be quickly approved (once the necessary requirements are received), while the Foster Family Home Service has Applicant Status awaiting compliance (all required checks, certifications and training) for approval. In CHRIS, the relative will have only one (1) Provider Number showing two (2) services provided by the family.
- K. Enter fictive kin into CHRIS as a Provider opening two (2) placement services: Provisional (Fictive Kin) Placement (No Board) Service, and Foster Family Home Service. The Provisional (Fictive Kin) Placement (No Board) Service must be quickly approved (once the necessary requirements are received), while the Foster Family Home Service has Applicant Status awaiting compliance (all required checks, certifications

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and training) for approval. In CHRIS, the fictive kin will have only one (1) Provider Number showing two (2) services provided by the family. Provisional (Fictive Kin) will mirror the same Board Rate as Provisional (Relative) which carries the payment scale status of "None."

- L. Request any necessary policy waivers ~~and~~/or alternative compliances to waive non-safety standards for the relative/fictive kin prior to referring to training.
- M. Refer to Policy VII: Development of Foster Homes, to continue with the process of opening the provisional foster home as a regular DCFS foster home.
- N. Support the relative/fictive kin throughout the process of becoming a provisional and regular DCFS foster home.
- O. Assess the situation with the FSW and Supervisor(s) if the relative does not come into compliance within six (6) months of the placement of the child in the home.

The FSW Supervisor will:

- A. Conference with and support the FSW on the case as necessary.
- B. Review and approve the CFS-6024-Permanency Planning Hearing Court Report.

The Resource Worker Supervisor will:

- A. Upon receipt of a notification email from a worker who has removed children and identified a prospective provisional placement (see Procedure VI-B1: Provisional Foster Home Placement for Children in Foster Care for more information), be responsible for ensuring completion of CFS-450: Prospective Provisional Foster Parent Information and Questionnaire within forty- eights (48) hours of receipt of notification.
- B. Conference with and support the Resource Worker as necessary regarding opening the provisional foster home.

PROCEDURE VI-B32: Relative and Fictive Kin Custody for Children in Foster Care

0201/201205

The Family Service Worker will:

- A. Ask the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) from whom custody was removed to provide information on appropriate relatives to include, as available (if not already provided):
 - 1) The names, addresses, and phone numbers of any relatives who may be placement resources for the child;
 - 2) The names, addresses, phone numbers, and other identifying information on any putative father(s) of the child.
- B. If appropriate relatives cannot be identified or are otherwise not able to serve as a placement resource, ask the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) from whom custody was removed to provide information on appropriate fictive kin to include, as available (if not already provided):
 - 1) The names, addresses, and phone numbers of any fictive kin who may be placement resources for the child.
- C. Interview the child, if age appropriate, to assess how the child may feel about placement with a specific relative or fictive kin.
- D. Complete the home study, to include Central Registry Checks, State Police Criminal Background Checks, and Vehicle Safety (DMV) Program Checks on all applicable household members, on the relative or fictive kin and submit to the FSW Supervisor for review and approval.
- E. Based on the results of the background checks listed above, request any necessary DCFS Policy Waivers.
- F. If FSW Supervisor approval is attained, submit the home study to the court with the recommendation to place the child with the relative or fictive kin so that the relative or fictive kin may obtain legal temporary custody.

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- G. Open a protective services case on the child if the court grants temporary custody to the relative or fictive kin.
- H. Schedule a staffing within thirty (30) days of opening the protective services case.
- I. Invite the child's parents, relatives, the child (if age appropriate), and community providers as appropriate. During the staffing these individuals will determine the permanency goal for the child: reunification, adoption, guardianship, permanent custody with the relative, or APPLA.
- J. Complete or update the FAST within thirty (30) days of opening the protective services case and submit to the FSW Supervisor for review and approval.
- K. Develop or update the ~~CFS-6010-~~ Case Plan within thirty (30) days of opening the protective services case and submit to the FSW Supervisor for review and approval.
- L. Complete the ~~CFS-6024-~~ Permanency Planning Hearing Court Report and submit to the FSW Supervisor for review and approval.
- M. After receiving approval from the FSW Supervisor for the ~~CFS-6024-~~ Permanency Planning Hearing Court Report, submit to the OCC attorney within fourteen (14) days prior to any Permanency Planning Hearing scheduled for the case.
- N. Submit the ~~CFS-6024-~~ Permanency Planning Hearing Court Report to OCC, CASA, and all parties no later than fourteen (14) days before the scheduled Permanency Planning Hearing.
- O. Hold staffings, as needed, in accordance with Procedure IV-C1: Case Staffings and update the FAST.
- P. Invite the Adoption Specialist to the staffing when appropriate.
- Q. Conduct a staffing to discuss closure when appropriate.

The FSW Supervisor will:

- A. Review and approve the home study.
- B. Review and approve the FAST within thirty (30) days of the FSW opening the protective services case.
- C. Review and approve the case plan within the thirty (30) days of the FSW opening the protective services case.
- D. Review and approve the ~~CFS-6024-~~ Permanency Planning Hearing Court Report prior to the FSW's submission of this report to the OCC attorney.
- E. Conference with and support the FSW on the case as necessary.

The Adoption Specialist will:

- A. Attend staffings when invited.
- B. Keep his or her Adoption Supervisor informed of the child's permanency goal and progress toward that goal.

POLICY VI-C: MAINTAINING FAMILY TIES IN OUT-OF-HOME PLACEMENTS

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Removal from the home and subsequent out-of-home placement are traumatic events for children. One way this trauma may be minimized is by maintaining family ties in out-of-home placements. Moreover, the Division believes that strengths of families and supporting these strengths contribute to life-long permanent relationships for children. This belief is supported by research demonstrating that children who maintain positive family ties while in out-of-home placement achieve better short- and long-term outcomes. If court orders differ from the requirements outlined in this policy and related procedures regarding visits and contact with family members, the Division will comply with court orders accordingly.

CONTACT WITH PARENTS

In order to maintain and strengthen the parent-child relationship, visits and other forms of contact with parents and their children in out-of-home placements are essential. Visits between parents, including noncustodial and putative parents as applicable, and their children will occur at least weekly, based upon the child's best interest. More frequent visits are encouraged, as appropriate. A positive drug or alcohol screen in and of itself will not result in the postponement ~~and/or~~ withholding of visits between a parent and child in DHS custody unless:

- A. The parent is under the influence of drugs ~~and/or~~ alcohol at the time of the scheduled visit and has observable behavior indicating impairment of parenting capacity; or,
- B. A court order specifies that a parent's positive screen will result in the withholding of parent-child visits.

There is a legal presumption that visits may be unsupervised unless evidence has been provided to and the court has made a ruling that unsupervised visitation is not in the best interest of the children involved. The burden is upon Division staff to provide evidence regarding why visits must be supervised or may be unsupervised.

If the court orders supervised visitation, the parent from whom custody of the child has been removed will receive a minimum of four (4) hours of supervised visitation per week. The court may order less than four (4) hours of supervised visitation if the court determines that the supervised visitation is not in the best interest of the child or will impose an extreme hardship on one (1) of the parties.

-Visits which have been ordered to be supervised may be graduated to unsupervised depending on the dynamics of the case. Any Division staff member as well as approved student interns and volunteers may supervise visits. However, the appropriate supervisor will individualize each assignment to supervise visits. When making the assignment the supervisor will consider the family's history, current level of functioning, and any other applicable factors as well as the skill set of the individual selected to supervise the visit.

The preferred location for visits is the parent's home or, if that is not possible, in the most home-like setting possible. Office visits are a last resort. Visits are encouraged to include any variety of quality family time activities such as visiting a library/story time at a library, playing at a park, making and enjoying a meal together, etc., as appropriate for an individual family.

While children are in out-of-home placements, the Division, in conjunction with foster parents and placement providers, will update parents regarding their children's lives including providing information regarding, without limitation, status of physical, behavioral, and emotional health, progress in school, involvement in extracurricular activities, and achievements. Parents will be invited to participate in their children's school, faith-based, and extracurricular activities as appropriate.

The specific plan for visits between a child in out-of-home placement and his or her parents, as appropriate, will be included in the case plan. As the family prepares for reunification, the frequency and ~~for~~ length of visits will increase while the level of supervision will decrease accordingly. The case plan will be updated as needed to reflect changes regarding visits and other contact.

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Foster parents and approved relative and fictive kin volunteers may communicate directly with biological parents when appropriate and in the child's best interest to give updates on the child's progress, inform them of the child's school and extracurricular activities, and share photos. Foster parents and approved relative and fictive kin volunteers are also encouraged to consider supporting the parent-child relationship in other ways such as helping the child write letters to his or her parents, creating Life Books with the children to then share with the biological parents, and presenting a positive view of the child's parents to the child to the extent possible.

In addition, since foster parents can model positive parenting skills that may help the biological parents to achieve reunification, foster parents may consider hosting parent-child visits, if appropriate and acceptable to all individuals involved.

When assessing the appropriateness of foster parents and approved relative and fictive kin volunteers communicating directly with biological parents, holding parent-child visits in the foster parent home, or transporting the child to parent-child visits, the Division will ensure the foster parents and approved relative and fictive kin volunteers thoroughly understand all court orders related to parent-child contact and consider:

- A. Various family dynamics;
- B. Progress of the case at that point in time; and,
- C. Experience and other skills sets of the foster family or approved relative and fictive kin volunteers.

DCFS staff members will discuss with foster parents, approved relative and fictive kin volunteers, and biological parents the level of comfort that both sets of parents have with foster parents or approved relative and fictive kin volunteers providing transportation to parent-child visits or, as applicable to foster parents hosting/supervising parent-child visits. Staff will not expect foster parents to host/supervise parent-child visits ~~and/or~~ transport to parent-child visits:

- A. During the first placement they have as foster parents;
- B. During the first month of any open foster care case regardless of the number of times they have served as foster parents.

Exceptions to the above guidelines may be made if the foster parents express an interest in assisting with parent-child visits under these conditions. Even when foster parents state they are willing to assist with parent-child visits during the first placement they have as foster parents or during the first month of any open foster care case, the FSW will make a decision regarding the foster parents' involvement with parent-child visits after carefully assessing each individual case and the dynamics involved. Even after the first month of an open foster care case, if foster parents desire to assist with parent-child visits, the FSW will continue to assess on a case by case basis the appropriateness of foster parent involvement for each foster care placement.

The Division will assist the foster parents and approved relative and fictive kin volunteers and biological parents in establishing appropriate expectations and boundaries regarding communication and interaction (e.g., frequency and specific times the biological parent may call ~~and/or~~ visit the foster home). Any direct interaction between the biological parents and foster parents or approved relative and fictive kin volunteers in no way relieves the Division of its duty to ensure the biological parents remain current on all aspects of their case and their children.

CONTACT WITH SIBLINGS

Sibling relationships are emotionally powerful and critically important not only in childhood, but over the course of a lifetime with sibling relationships likely to be the longest relationships most people experience. Siblings include those individuals who would be considered a sibling under state/tribal law if it were not for the disruption in parental rights, such as a termination of parental rights or death of a parent.

For children in out-of-home placements, sibling relationships can provide a significant source of continuity, stability, and comfort while in foster care. As such, when it is in the best interest of each of the children and barring extenuating circumstances, siblings are entitled to be placed together in out-of-home placements.

Siblings may be placed separately only if:

- A. Allegations of abuse between siblings are under investigation ~~and/or~~ have been founded;
 - 1) An assessment must be conducted by a mental health professional within five (5) days of placing siblings in different placements due to the abuse allegations between the siblings that are under investigation ~~and/or~~ have been founded.
 - a) The siblings may continue in the separated placements if the assessment by the mental health professional supports continuing the separated placements because placing the siblings together would be detrimental to the health, safety, or well-being of one or more of the children as related to the abuse allegations ~~and/or~~ investigation findings;
- B. An assessment by a mental health professional determines that placing the siblings together would be detrimental to the health, safety, or well-being of one or more of the children; or,
- C. The Division presents evidence to the court that there are no available placements that can take the entire sibling group.

If children must be separated, the Division will attempt to place them in close proximity in order to facilitate regular and meaningful contact. The Division will ensure the reasons for the separation of siblings into different foster homes or other approved placements are regularly reassessed and targeted recruitment efforts continue to reunite the siblings. The case plan must include when siblings will be reassessed to determine if they can be reunited at a later point in time. If the reassessment determines reunification is appropriate, the plan for placing siblings together will be documented in the case plan as well.

In an effort to maintain sibling connections for those siblings who are placed separately, the siblings' case will be reviewed by the court at least once every ~~ninety~~ (90) days to determine whether there have been reasonable efforts to reunite the siblings and to allow regular and meaningful contact with the siblings. If the court approves a paper review, the 90-day court reviews of separated siblings may be satisfied by such a review and a hearing is not required.

In addition, siblings who must be placed separately will have consistent and meaningful contact at least weekly when possible. While face-to-face visits in home-like settings or other family-friendly locations are preferred and encouraged, other forms of communication such as phone calls, emails, and Skype or FaceTime (or similar program) conversations are permissible, as age and developmentally appropriate, to meet the weekly contact requirement. However, siblings who are placed separately will have at least bi-weekly face-to-face visits unless ~~an~~ a FSW Supervisor grants a visit waiver. The plan for sibling visits and other contact will be outlined in the case plan. Visits or other forms of contact with siblings will not be withheld by DCFS or any placement provider as a behavioral consequence unless there are documented safety concerns for one or more of the siblings.

Siblings also have the right to remain actively involved in each other's lives. Aside from regularly scheduled visits, the Division, foster parents, approved relative and fictive kin volunteers, and other placement providers will work together to allow siblings to share celebrations including birthdays, holidays, graduations, and other meaningful milestones when possible. The Division, foster parents, approved relative and fictive kin volunteers, and other placement providers will also collaborate to ensure siblings attend each other's extracurricular events such as athletic events, musical performances, and faith-based events when reasonable and practical.

The Division will ensure siblings are included in one another's case plan staffing decisions and permanency planning decisions as age and developmentally appropriate. Siblings will also be notified when another sibling has a change in placement or exits foster care as age and developmentally appropriate. When a sibling leaves foster care, that sibling will be allowed, as appropriate, to maintain contact with a sibling who remains in an out-of-home placement. The Division will also strive to help children in foster care maintain relationships with their

siblings who are not in out-of-home placements or who have been adopted or placed in permanent custody or guardianship.

CONTACT WITH RELATIVES AND OTHER FICTIVE KIN

In an effort to ensure foster care supports the permanency and well-being of the children in DHS custody, children may have an opportunity to visit or have other forms of contact with non-custodial parents, grandparents, great-grandparents, other relatives, and fictive kin provided the visits are in the best interest of the children. It is the responsibility of the Division to explore the willingness and appropriateness of identified relatives and fictive kin interested in being involved in the lives of children in out-of-home placements.

CONTACT AFTER TERMINATION OF PARENTAL RIGHTS

If it is in the child's best interest, visits with relatives may continue after Termination of Parental Rights (TPR). Visits after TPR will continue until an adoptive placement is made or the out-of-home placement case is closed. The Division will encourage adoptive parents to consider allowing contact between biological relatives and fictive kin with their adopted children, as appropriate. Continuation of visits with relatives does not include the parents for whom the agency has obtained TPR.

POLICY VI-G: CASE REVIEW JUDICIAL HEARINGS FOR CHILDREN IN OUT-OF-HOME PLACEMENT

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ADJUDICATION & DISPOSITION HEARINGS

Following a probable cause hearing, an adjudication hearing shall be held to determine whether the allegations in a petition are substantiated by a preponderance of the evidence. The dependency-neglect adjudication hearing shall be held within thirty (30) days after the probable cause hearing under A.C.A. § 9-27-315. On motion of the court and parties for good cause shown, it may be continued for no more than thirty (30) days following the first thirty (30) days (i.e., up to sixty (60) days after the probable cause hearing). However, if necessary and relevant evidence cannot be obtained in a timely manner the dependency-neglect adjudication hearing may be continued for up to an additional thirty (30) days (i.e., up to ninety (90) days after the probable cause hearing) upon motion of the court or any party.

In dependency-neglect cases, a written adjudication order shall be filed by the court within thirty (30) days of the date of the hearing or prior to the next hearing, whichever is sooner. The Office of Chief Counsel (OCC) is responsible for drafting and filing court orders. The court can determine the case disposition at the adjudication or at a separate hearing. A disposition determines what actions the agency will take in the case.

A judicial determination as to whether reasonable efforts were made or were not required to prevent removal must be made no later than sixty (60) days from the date the child is removed from the home. If a judicial determination concerning reasonable efforts to prevent removal is not made within the specified timeframe, the child will be ineligible for IV-E foster care maintenance payments for the duration of that stay in foster care.

SIX-MONTH REVIEW HEARINGS

The court will review out-of-home placement cases no less than every six (6) months, including children in out-of-home cases who are placed out-of-state. The first six-month review shall be held no later than six (6) months from the date of the original out-of-home placement of the child. However, the court may require a review prior to the sixth-month review hearing. In addition, at any time during the life of an out-of-home placement case, any party may request the court to review the case, and the party requesting the hearing shall provide reasonable notice to all parties.

At each sixth-month hearing the court will review the case sufficiently to determine the future status of the child based on the child's best interest. The court shall determine and include in its orders the following:

- A. Whether the case plan, services, and placement meet the needs and best interest of the child, with the child's health, safety, and educational needs specifically addressed;
- B. Whether the Division has made reasonable efforts to provide family services;
- C. Whether the case plan is moving towards an appropriate permanency plan for the child, per A.C.A. § 9-27-338;
- D. Whether the visitation plan is appropriate for the child, the parent(s), or any siblings, if separated.

The court may order any studies, evaluations, or post-disposition reports, if needed. All such documents will be provided in writing to all parties and counsel at least (2) two days prior to the review hearing. All parties will be given a fair opportunity to dispute any part of a study, evaluation, or post-disposition report.

In making its findings, the court shall consider the following:

- A. The extent of compliance with the case plan, including but not limited to, a review of the Division's care for the health, safety, and education of the child while the child has been in an out-of-home placement;
- B. The extent of progress made toward alleviating or mitigating the causes necessitating the out-of-home placement;

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- C. Whether the child should be returned to his or her parent(s) and whether the child's health and safety can be protected by his or her parent(s) if returned home;
- D. An appropriate permanency plan pursuant to A.C.A. § 9-27-338 for the child, including concurrent planning (e.g., adoption, legal guardianship, APPLA, as appropriate).

Pertaining to title IV-E eligibility requirements, the judicial review is conducted by court review, not an administrative review process. During each six-month review, the court shall make determinations based upon the best interest of the child. The best interest of the child shall be paramount at every stage of the judicial process.

PERMANENCY PLANNING HEARING

Each child in an out-of-home placement, including children placed out-of-state, shall have a permanency planning hearing (PPH) no later than twelve (12) months of the date the child is considered to have entered foster care and not less frequently than every twelve (12) months thereafter during the continuation of foster care. A child will be considered to have entered foster care on the earlier of:

- the date of the first judicial finding that the child has been subjected to child abuse or neglect, or
- the date that is sixty (60) days after the date on which the child is removed from the home.

In-state and out-of-state options, including interstate placement, if appropriate, will be considered when making reasonable efforts to place the child in a timely manner in accordance with the permanency plan. Reasonable efforts will be made to complete the steps necessary ~~in order~~ to finalize the legal permanent placement of the child. If the child is in an out-of-state placement at the time of the hearing, the court will determine whether the placement continues to be appropriate and is in the best interest of the child. When the court determines that reasonable efforts to return the child home are not required, the court shall hold a permanency planning hearing within thirty (30) days of the determination ~~in order~~ to enter a new disposition in the case to determine the child's future status. A permanency planning hearing shall also be held after a child has been in an out-of-home placement for fifteen (15) of the previous twenty-two (22) months, excluding the time spent while the child is on a trial home placement and runaway status. The permanency planning hearing will be conducted by the court, not by an administrative body.

When it becomes necessary to transfer a case to another venue, the court will contact the judge in the other venue to confirm that the transfer will be accepted. After confirmation has been received, the transferring judge will enter a transfer order with the time and date of the next hearing and the location of the court in the new venue. The transferring judge will immediately transmit the order to the judge in the new venue. A copy of the order will be provided to all parties and attorneys to the case. The transferring court will copy and send all court records to the judge in the new venue.

The Division must obtain a judicial determination that reasonable efforts were made to finalize the permanency plan for the child no later than twelve (12) months of the date the child entered foster care. If a child remains in an out-of-home placement after the initial permanency planning hearing, an annual permanency planning hearing shall be held to reassess the permanency goal selected for the child. If a judicial determination regarding reasonable efforts to finalize a permanency plan is not made, the child will be ineligible under title IV-E from the end of the 12th month following the date the child is considered to have entered foster care or the end of the 12th month following the month in which the most recent judicial determination of reasonable efforts to finalize a permanency plan was made, and remains ineligible until such a judicial determination is made.

Reasonable efforts to finalize an alternate permanency plan such as placing a child ~~with for a fit and willing relative or fictive kin for~~ adoption or with a legal guardian, including identifying appropriate in-~~s~~state and out-of-~~s~~state placements, ~~should will~~ be made concurrently with reasonable efforts to reunify the child and family.

The permanency planning hearing (PPH) shall determine the permanency goal for the child that includes, listed in order of preference, in accordance with the best interest, health, and safety of the child:

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- A. Placing custody of the child with a fit parent at the permanency planning hearing.
- B. Returning the child to the guardian or custodian from whom the child was initially removed at the permanency planning hearing.
- C. Authorizing a plan to place custody of the child with a parent, guardian, or custodian only if the court finds that:

- 1) The parent, guardian, or custodian is complying with the established case plan and orders of the court, making significant progress toward achieving goals established in the case plan and diligently working toward reunification or placement in the home of the parent, guardian, or custodian.

~~a) A parent's, guardian's, or custodian's resumption of contact or overtures toward participating in the case plan or following court orders in the months or weeks immediately preceding the permanency planning hearing are insufficient grounds for authorizing a plan to return or be~~

~~b) placed in the home as the permanency plan. Regardless of when the effort was made, the court shall consider all evidence of an effort made by the parent, guardian, or custodian to remedy the conditions that led to the removal of the child(ren) from the custody of the parent, guardian, or custodian and give the evidence the appropriate weight and consideration in relation to the safety, health, and well-being of the child(ren).~~

~~c) b) The burden is on the parent, guardian, or custodian to demonstrate genuine, sustainable investment in completing the requirements of the case plan and following court orders in order to authorize a plan to return or be placed in the home as the permanency goal.~~

- 2) The parent, guardian, or custodian is making significant and measurable progress toward remedying the conditions that:

- a) Caused the child's removal from the home or the child's continued removal from the home; or,
- b) Prohibits placement of the child in the home of a parent.

- 3) Placement of the child in the home of the parent, guardian, or custodian shall occur within a time frame that is consistent with the child's developmental needs but no later than three (3) months from the date of the PPH.

~~D. Authorizing a plan to obtain a guardianship or adoption with a fit and willing relative or fictive kin.~~

~~D.E. Authorizing a plan for adoption with the Division filing a petition for termination of parental rights TPR, unless:~~

- 1) The child is being cared for by a relative and the court finds that:

a. Either:

~~i. , TPR is not in the best interest of the child; t) The relative has made a long-term commitment to the child; and, the relative is willing to pursue adoption, guardianship, or permanent custody of the child; or~~

~~i.~~

~~ii. The child is being cared for by his or her minor parent who is in foster care and TPR is not in the best interest of the child; and,~~

b. That termination of parental rights is not in the best interest of the child;

- 2) The Division has documented in the case plan a compelling reason why filing a petition to terminate on parental rights is petition would not be in the child's best interest and the court approves the compelling reason as documented in the case plan; or
- 3) The Division has not provided the family of the child with services, consistent with the time period in the case plan, the services the Division deemed necessary for the safe return of the child to the child's home if reunification services were required to be made to the family.

Termination of Parental Rights

At any time during the course of a case, DHS, the attorney ad litem, or the court can request a hearing on whether or not reunification services should be terminated. The requesting party shall provide notice to the parties at least fourteen (14) calendar days before the hearing. The notice shall identify the grounds for recommending termination of reunification services in sufficient detail to put the family on notice.

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The requesting party shall present the case. The court shall conduct and complete a hearing on a “no reunification services” request within fifty (50) days of the date of written notice to the defendants. However, upon good cause shown, the hearing may be continued for an additional twenty (20) days.

The court shall determine whether reunification services shall be terminated and enter an order of that determination. If the court determines that reunification services shall be terminated, the court shall hold a permanency planning hearing within thirty (30) days after the determination. If the court determines the permanency goal to be TPR, the Department shall file a petition to terminate parental rights within thirty (30) days from the date of the entry of the order establishing such goal. The court shall conduct and complete a TPR hearing within ninety (90) days from the date the termination of parental rights petition is filed, unless continued for good cause. After an order of termination of parental rights is filed, the court shall review the case at least every six (6) months until permanency is achieved for the child. A permanency hearing shall be held each year following the initial hearing until permanence is achieved. (Refer to Policy VIII-C.) The court reviews continue, even if a case is on appeal.

The court may terminate parental rights on one (1) parent and not the other parent if the court finds that it is in the best interest of the child.

Post-TPR Visits

If it is in the child’s best interest, visits with siblings and with relatives may take place after TPR. Visitation after TPR will continue until an adoption placement is made or the out-of-home placement case is closed. Continuation of visits with relatives does not include the parents for whom the agency has obtained TPR.

E.F. Legal guardianship - If the court grants legal guardianship no further services or periodic reviews are required. If a legal guardianship supported by a subsidy is put in place, the Division will conduct an annual review of the family’s and child’s circumstances and an annual report to the court will be filed.

F.G. Permanent custody with a fit and willing relative - If the court grants permanent custody no further services or periodic reviews are required.

G.H. Independence (see definition in Appendix I: Glossary), including an Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (APPLA). In the case of a child who has attained age sixteen (16), the permanency planning hearing will determine the services needed to assist the child to make the transition from foster care to successful adulthood. Independence shall be selected only if the Division has documented to the circuit court a compelling reason for determining that it would not be in the best interest of the child to follow one (1) of the permanency plans above.

If DHS concludes, after considering reunification, adoption, legal guardianship, or permanent placement with a fit and willing relative, that the most appropriate permanency plan for a child is placement in another planned permanent living arrangement, DHS will document to the court the compelling reason for the alternate plan.

The Department may seek the services of the Federal Parent Locator Service to search for absent parents at any point in order to facilitate a permanency plan.

Notification of Hearings and Reviews

The Department shall provide the foster parent(s) of a child, and any pre-adoptive parent or relative providing care for the child with timely notice of, and the right to be heard in, permanency planning hearings and six-month periodic reviews held with respect to the child during the time the child is in the care of such foster parent, pre-adoptive parent or relative caregiver. Notice of, and the right to be heard, does not include the right to standing as a party to the case.

In any permanency planning hearing, including any hearing regarding the transition of the child from foster care to transitional living, procedural safeguards shall be applied to assure the court or administrative body conducting

the hearing consults with age-appropriate children regarding the proposed permanency or transition plans. The hearing shall also address procedural safeguards with respect to parental rights pertaining to the removal of the child from the home of his or her parents, to a change in the child's placement, and to any determination affecting visitation privileges of parents.

Judicial determinations regarding "contrary to the welfare," reasonable efforts to prevent removal, and reasonable efforts to finalize the permanency plan in effect, including judicial determinations that reasonable efforts are not required, must be explicitly documented and made on a case-by-case basis and so stated in the court order.

Reasonable efforts are not required to reunify the child and family if:

- A. The court has determined that the parent has subjected the child to aggravated circumstances (see Glossary);
- B. The court has determined that the parent has committed:
 - 1) Murder of any child;
 - 2) Manslaughter of any child;
 - 3) Aiding or abetting, attempting, conspiring, or soliciting to commit such a murder or such a manslaughter; or
 - 4) A felony battery that results in serious bodily injury to any child; or,
 - 5) Abandoned an infant as defined by A.C.A. § 9-27-303; or,
 - 6) Registered with a sex offender registry under the Adam Walsh Protection and Safety Act of 2006.
- C. The parental rights of the parent with respect to a sibling have been terminated involuntarily.

If reasonable efforts and "contrary to the welfare" judicial determinations are not included as required in the court orders, a transcript of the court proceedings is the only other documentation acceptable to verify that the required determinations have been made.

Neither affidavits nor nunc pro tunc orders will be acceptable as verification documentation in support of reasonable efforts and "contrary to the welfare" judicial determinations.

Court orders that reference state law to substantiate judicial determinations are not acceptable, even if state law provides that removal must be based on a judicial determination that remaining in the home would be contrary to the child's welfare or that removal can only be ordered after reasonable efforts have been made.

At any hearing in which the Department of Human Services is ordered by the court to provide services for a family, the court shall provide the Department with the opportunity to be heard. When DHS is not a party to the case, failure by the court to provide at least five (5) working days' notice to DHS renders any part of the order pertaining to DHS void. Refer to Policy II-G for information related to FINS cases.

POLICY VIII-M: Resumption of Services Post-Termination and Reinstatement of Parental Rights

0401/201208

OVERVIEW

Given that behavior change and the work of change is a part of the child welfare system's daily challenge, the Division recognizes that there may be parents who previously had their parental rights terminated, but at a later point in time significantly alter the life circumstances that contributed to the removal of their children and the subsequent termination. These parents may qualify for resumption of services as described in the policy below. Based on the outcome of the resumption of services, the court may then consider reinstatement of parental rights. Resumption of services and a subsequent reinstatement of parental rights may provide additional permanency options for children in foster care, particularly for youth who have been in the foster care system for an extended period of time without finding a permanent family.

INITIAL ELIGIBILITY

The Department of Human Services, Division of Children and Family Services (DCFS) or an attorney ad litem may file a motion to resume services for a parent whose parental rights were previously terminated. Resumption of services may be considered if the child:

- A. ~~Does not have a legal parent~~ is currently in the custody of the Department;
- B. Is not in an adoptive placement, pre-adoptive placement, or under another permanent placement and there is some evidence that the child is not likely to achieve permanency within a reasonable period of time as viewed from the child's perspective; or,
- C. Was previously adopted, appointed a permanent guardian, or placed in the permanent custody of another individual and the adoption, guardianship, or custodial placement was disrupted or otherwise dissolved.

In addition, at least three (3) years must have passed between the date the order terminating parental rights was entered and the date a motion to resume services on behalf of that parent is filed. The three-year waiting period may be waived by the court if it is in the best interest of the child. It must also be determined that the parent in no way interfered with the child's ability to achieve permanency prior to the consideration of resumption of services.

ASSESSMENT

If all of the criteria above are met, the agency must then assess whether the parent and child are appropriate candidates for resumption of services before DCFS requests to file a motion to resume services. This will be determined, at a minimum, through:

- A. An initial walk-through of the parent's home to identify any safety factors or risk concerns;
- B. Discussions with the parent, child, parties to the case, and relevant stakeholders (e.g., child's therapist, child's teacher, etc.); and,
- C. The completion of a home study.

The home study will include background checks to identify current issues and differentiate between current maltreatment and criminal issues versus issues occurring prior to the termination of parental rights.

Through the assessment above, it must be determined that the parent is appropriate at the time of filing the motion for resumption of services. DCFS Area Director approval must be obtained prior to moving forward with a petition for resumption of services.

When determining whether to grant or deny a motion to resume services, the court will consider:

- A. Efforts made by DCFS to achieve adoption or other permanent placement for the child, including any barriers preventing permanency from being achieved;

MARK-UP

- B. Current status of the parent, including the extent to which the parent has remedied any conditions that led to the termination of parental rights (TPR);
- C. Willingness of the parent to participate in services offered; and,
- D. The child's wishes regarding resumption of contact, visitation, or placement with the parent.

RESUMPTION OF SERVICES

If an order granting a motion for resumption of services is entered, a staffing will be held within thirty (30) days. An ~~updated~~ Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) assessment and corresponding case plan will also be developed within thirty (30) days. Extensive services or supports should not be required to establish parental fitness. Rather, services and supports offered through a case plan for resumption of services will be designed to help facilitate the re-establishment of the parent-child bond. Examples may include regular visitation and family counseling. Such services and supports will be put in place through the case plan in an effort to work toward a reinstatement of parental rights, if appropriate, and, ultimately, a stable and permanent reunification.

If multiple counties have been involved over the life of a case that is deemed appropriate for resumption of services, the applicable DCFS Area Directors will collaborate to determine which county will serve as primary regarding the development, execution, and oversight of the case plan.

A parent will not be named as a party to a motion filed for resumption of services, but the parent will have the right to be heard at a hearing on the motion. The court may order the parent to pay for some or all of the costs associated with the court-ordered family services.

REINSTATEMENT OF PARENTAL RIGHTS

Based on the outcome of the resumption of services, the court may then consider reinstatement of parental rights, as appropriate. Services to the family must continue for at least 180 days before DHS or an attorney ad litem may file a petition to reinstate parental rights. A petition to reinstate parental rights will be filed in the circuit court that had jurisdiction over the petition to terminate parental rights. Parental rights may be reinstated if the court finds by clear and convincing evidence that:

- A. Reinstatement of parental rights is in the best interest of the child; and,
- B. There has been a material change in circumstance for the parent since TPR.

If parental rights are reinstated, the case will remain open until the child has resided with the parent for at least six (6) months.

An order reinstating parental rights restores all rights, powers, privileges, immunities, duties, and obligations of the parent as to the child, including custody, control, and support of the child. However, an order reinstating parental rights does not vacate or affect the validity of a previous order terminating parental rights.

State of Arkansas *As Engrossed: S1/29/19 H2/13/19*

92nd General Assembly

Regular Session, 2019

A Bill

SENATE BILL 91

By: Senator A. Clark

By: Representative Sullivan

For An Act To Be Entitled

AN ACT TO AMEND THE LAW CONCERNING THE RESUMPTION OF
SERVICES FOR CERTAIN PARENTS; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

Subtitle

TO AMEND THE LAW CONCERNING THE
RESUMPTION OF SERVICES FOR CERTAIN
PARENTS.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

SECTION 1. Arkansas Code § 9-27-369(a), concerning motions to resume services for a parent whose parental rights were previously terminated, is amended to read as follows:

(a) The Department of Human Services or an attorney ad litem may file a motion to resume services for a parent whose parental rights were previously terminated under this subchapter if:

(1) The child:

(A) ~~Does not have a legal parent~~ Is currently in the custody of the department;

(B) Is not in an adoptive placement, a pre-adoptive placement, or under another permanent placement and there is some evidence that the juvenile is not likely to achieve permanency within a reasonable period of time as viewed from the child's perspective; or

(C) Was previously adopted, appointed a permanent guardian, or placed in the permanent custody of another individual and the adoption, guardianship, or custodial placement was disrupted or otherwise



1 dissolved; and

2 (2)(A) The order terminating the parental rights of the parent
3 who is the subject of a motion filed under this section was entered at least
4 three (3) years before the date on which the motion to resume services was
5 filed.

6 (B) The three-year waiting period may be waived if it is
7 in the best interest of the child.

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9 /s/A. Clark

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12 APPROVED: 3/6/19
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State of Arkansas

92nd General Assembly

Regular Session, 2019

A Bill

HOUSE BILL 1643

By: Representatives Burch, Capp

By: Senator A. Clark

For An Act To Be Entitled

AN ACT TO AMEND THE LAW CONCERNING PUTATIVE PARENTS
UNDER THE ARKANSAS JUVENILE CODE OF 1989; TO AMEND
THE LAW ON THE TERMINATION OF PARENTAL RIGHTS; TO
AMEND THE LAW CONCERNING TRIAL HOME PLACEMENTS; AND
FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

Subtitle

TO AMEND THE LAW CONCERNING PUTATIVE
PARENTS UNDER THE ARKANSAS JUVENILE CODE
OF 1989; TO AMEND THE LAW ON THE
TERMINATION OF PARENTAL RIGHTS; AND TO
AMEND THE LAW CONCERNING TRIAL HOME
PLACEMENTS.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

SECTION 1. The introductory language of Arkansas Code § 9-27-311(c)(2), concerning when a putative parent should be named as a party in a dependency-neglect and termination of parental rights petition, is amended to read as follows:

(2) However:

(A) In dependency-neglect petitions, the juvenile shall have party status and be named in the petition as a respondent and shall be served under § 9-27-312;

(B) In Unless otherwise provided under subdivision
(d)(2)(A) of this section, in a dependency-neglect and termination of



parental rights petition, the putative parent shall not be ~~named as~~ a party unless the circuit court determines that the putative parent:

(i) Has established paternity and the circuit court enters an order establishing the putative parent as the ~~legal~~ parent for the purposes of this subchapter and directs that the parent be added to the case as a party defendant; or

(ii) Has established significant contacts with the juvenile and the circuit court enters an order that putative parent rights have attached and the putative parent shall be added to the case as a party defendant; and

(C) In a paternity action, the petitioner shall name as defendants only the mother, the putative father, or the presumed legal father, if any.

SECTION 2. Arkansas Code § 9-27-311(d)(2), concerning a proceeding notice under Rule 4 of the Arkansas Rules of Civil Procedure that the Department of Human Services must provide to a putative parent when the putative parent is identified, is amended to read as follows:

(2)(A)(i) ~~The department~~ A petitioner may name and serve a putative parent as a party under § 9-27-312 to resolve the party status and rights under § 9-27-325 or terminate the rights of the putative parent under § 9-27-341.

(ii) If the petitioner does not name and serve a putative parent as party in accordance with subdivision (d)(2)(A)(i) of this section, the petitioner shall provide a putative parent with notice under Rule 4 of the Arkansas Rules of Civil Procedure of a proceeding as soon as the putative parent is identified.

(B) The notice shall include information about:

(i) The method of establishing paternity;

(ii) The right of the putative parent to prove significant contacts; and

(iii) The right of the putative parent to be heard by the court.

(C) ~~The department~~ petitioner shall provide the notice to the court and the parties to the case.

SECTION 3. Arkansas Code § 9-27-316(h)(4), concerning a putative parent's burden to prove significant contacts with the child and the appointment of counsel for a putative parent, is amended to read as follows:

(4)(A)(i) A putative parent has the burden to prove paternity and significant contacts with the child ~~so that putative rights attach.~~

~~(ii) The putative parent shall request appointed counsel for a termination of parental rights hearing if the goal of the case changes to adoption with a termination of parental rights petition to be filed.~~

(B) The court shall make the findings required in subdivision (h)(3) of this section to determine whether a putative parent is entitled to appointed counsel at the termination hearing.

(C)(i) ~~If the court determines that the putative parent is entitled to appointed counsel under subdivision (h)(3) of this section,~~ The termination petition shall include the putative parent as provided under § 9-27-311(c)(2)(B).

(ii) The court shall appoint counsel subject to subdivision (h)(3) of this section for the putative parent at any time the court establishes adoption as the case goal with a termination of parental rights petition to be filed.

~~(D) If the putative parent, after notice by the department, has not made an attempt to establish significant contacts with his or her child or the court determines that the putative parent has not established significant contacts, only legal parents shall be included in the termination petition and no further notice is required of the putative parent.~~

SECTION 4. Arkansas Code § 9-27-325(o)(2)-(6), concerning notice to a putative parent in a dependency-neglect proceeding, a putative parent's burden to prove significant contacts, when a putative parent may be named as a party, and when a court may order a DNA test, is amended to read as follows:

(2)(A)(i) A petitioner may name and serve a putative parent as a party under § 9-27-312 to resolve the party status and rights under § 9-27-325 or terminate the rights of the putative parent under § 9-27-341.

(ii) If the petitioner does not name and serve a

1 putative parent as a party in accordance with subdivision (o)(2)(A)(i) of
 2 this section, the petitioner ~~The department~~ shall provide a putative parent
 3 with notice under Rule 4 of the Arkansas Rules of Civil Procedure of a
 4 proceeding as soon as the putative parent is identified.

5 (B) The notice shall include information about:

- 6 (i) The method of establishing paternity;
- 7 (ii) The right of the putative parent to prove
 8 significant contacts; and
- 9 (iii) The right of the putative parent to be heard
 10 by the court.

11 (C) The ~~department~~ petitioner shall provide the notice to
 12 the court and the parties to the case.

13 (3)(A)(i) If the petitioner has named and served a putative
 14 parent under §§ 9-27-311 and 9-27-325, the court shall resolve the party
 15 status of a putative parent and the rights of the putative parent as a
 16 putative father.

17 (ii) A court may consider the termination of the
 18 rights of a putative parent under § 9-27-341 if the court finds that the
 19 rights of the putative parent as a putative father under subdivision (o)(5)
 20 of this section have attached.

21 (B) The court shall provide a putative parent the
 22 opportunity to be heard regarding his or her efforts in establishing
 23 paternity and his or her significant contacts with regard to his or her
 24 children in dependency-neglect proceedings.

25 (C) The court shall order a DNA test of each putative
 26 parent who is made a party in a dependency-neglect proceeding.

27 (4) A putative parent has the burden to prove paternity and
 28 significant contacts with the child so that putative rights attach.

29 (5)(A) A Except as provided under subdivision (o)(2)(A) of this
 30 section and § 9-27-311, a putative parent shall not be named as a party
 31 unless the circuit court determines that the putative parent:

32 (A)(i) Has established paternity and the circuit court
 33 enters an order establishing the putative parent as the legal parent for the
 34 purposes of this subchapter and directs that the parent be added to the case
 35 as a party defendant; or

36 (B)(ii) Has established significant contacts with the

juvenile and the circuit court enters an order that putative parent rights have attached and the putative parent shall be added to the case as a party defendant.

(B)(i) If the petitioner has named and served a putative parent under §§ 9-27-311 and 9-27-325 and the circuit court finds that the putative parent has established paternity, the court shall:

(a) Enter an order establishing the putative parent as a parent for the purposes of this subchapter; and

(b) Maintain the parent as a party defendant.

(ii) If the petitioner has named and served a putative parent under §§ 9-27-311 and 9-27-325 and the circuit court finds that the putative parent has established significant contacts with the juvenile, the court shall:

(a) Enter an order stating that the rights of the putative parent have attached; and

(b) Maintain the putative parent as a party defendant.

(C) If the circuit court finds that the putative parent has not established paternity and significant contacts, the circuit court shall:

(i) Find that the putative parent is not a parent for the purposes of this subchapter;

(ii) Find that the rights of the putative parent have not attached; and

(iii) Dismiss the putative parent from the case with no further notice to the putative parent required.

(6)(A) A circuit court may order a DNA test at any time.

(B) A DNA test that establishes the paternity of the putative parent is sufficient evidence to establish that the putative parent is ~~the legal~~ a parent for purposes of this subchapter and the court shall enter an appropriate order under subdivision ~~(e)(5)(A)~~ (o)(5) of this section.

SECTION 5. Arkansas Code § 9-27-341(a)(2), concerning the use of this section in cases in which the Department of Human Services is attempting to clear a juvenile for permanent placement, is amended to read as follows:

(2)(A) This section shall be used only in cases in which the department is attempting to clear a juvenile for permanent placement by terminating the parental rights of a parent and putative parent based on the definition of "parent" and "putative father" under § 9-27-303.

(B) This section shall not be used to terminate the rights of a putative parent if a court of competent jurisdiction has previously determined under § 9-27-325 that the rights of the putative parent have not attached.

SECTION 6. Arkansas Code § 9-27-341(b)(3)(B), concerning the grounds that operate as a basis for terminating parental rights, is amended to add an additional subdivision to read as follows:

(x) A putative parent has not established paternity or significant contacts with his or her child after:

(a) Being named and served as a party in a dependency-neglect proceeding; or

(b) Receiving notice of a dependency-neglect proceeding under § 9-27-311 or § 9-27-325.

SECTION 7. Arkansas Code § 9-27-341(b)(3)(B)(iii), concerning a presumptive legal father not being the biological father of a juvenile as a ground that operates as a basis for terminating parental rights, is amended to read as follows:

(iii) The ~~presumptive legal father~~ parent is not the biological ~~father~~ parent of the juvenile and the welfare of the juvenile can best be served by terminating the parental rights of the ~~presumptive legal father~~ parent;

SECTION 8. Arkansas Code § 9-27-341(c), concerning the effect of a termination of parental rights, is amended to read as follows:

(c)(1) An order terminating the relationship between parent and juvenile:

(A)(i) ~~divests~~ Divests the parent and the juvenile of all legal rights, powers, and obligations with respect to each other, including the right to withhold consent to adoption, except the right of the juvenile to inherit from the parent, that is terminated only by a final order of

1 adoption; and

2 (B)(i) Divests a putative parent and the juvenile of all
 3 rights, powers, and obligations with respect to the putative parent and the
 4 juvenile if the rights of the putative parent have attached under § 9-27-
 5 325(o) before or during the termination proceeding.

6 (ii) The divesting of all the rights, powers, and
 7 obligations of the putative parent and the juvenile shall be based on the
 8 same authority, requirements, limitations, and other provisions that apply to
 9 the termination of the rights of a parent, including without limitation the
 10 provision requiring the dismissal of a putative parent as a party to a case
 11 without further notice to the putative parent.

12 (2)(A) Termination of the relationship between a juvenile and
 13 one ~~(1)~~ parent shall not affect the relationship between the juvenile and the
 14 other parent if those rights are legally established.

15 (B) A court may terminate the rights of one ~~(1)~~ parent and
 16 not the other parent if the court finds that it is in the best interest of
 17 the child.

18 (3) An order terminating parental rights under this section:

19 (A) may May authorize the department to consent to
 20 adoption of the juvenile; and

21 (B) Dismisses the parent or putative parent subject to the
 22 termination of parental rights as a party to the case without further notice
 23 to the parent or putative parent required.

24
 25 SECTION 9. Arkansas Code § 9-27-355(c), concerning trial home
 26 placements with a parent of a juvenile or a person from whom custody of the
 27 juvenile was removed, is amended to read as follows:

28 (c)(1)(A) The court may order juveniles who are a juvenile who is in
 29 the custody of the department to be placed in a trial home placement with
 30 parents a parent of the juvenile or the person from whom custody of the
 31 juvenile was removed for a period not to exceed sixty (60) days, except as
 32 approved by the department, and in any event, not to exceed six (6) months. a
 33 period of:

34 (i) No longer than sixty (60) days; or

35 (ii) More than sixty (60) days but no longer than
 36 one hundred eighty (180) days with the consent of the department.

(B) The department may place a juvenile who is in its custody in a trial home placement with a parent of the juvenile or the person from whom custody of the juvenile was removed for no longer than one hundred eighty (180) days.

(C) A trial home placement with a parent who did not have custody of the juvenile at the time of the removal of the juvenile and placement into the custody of the department may occur only after the court or the department determines that:

(i) The trial home placement is in the best interest of the juvenile;

(ii) The noncustodial parent does not have a restriction on contact with the juvenile; and

(iii) There is no safety concern with the trial home placement after reviewing:

(a) The criminal background of the noncustodial parent;

(b) The home of the noncustodial parent and each person in the home of the noncustodial parent; and

(c) Other information in the records of the department, including without limitation records concerning foster care, child maltreatment, protective services, and supportive services.

(2)(A) At every stage of the case, the court shall consider the least restrictive placement for the juvenile and assess safety concerns that prevent either a trial home placement or the juvenile from being returned to or placed in the custody of the parent of the juvenile.

(B) The court shall detail the safety concerns in subdivision (c)(2)(A) of this section in its written order.

(C) Failure to complete a case plan is not a sufficient reason ~~in and of itself alone~~ to deny the placement of the juvenile in the home of a parent of the juvenile.

~~(D) Trial home placements~~ A trial home placement may be made with ~~parents~~ a parent of the juvenile or the person from whom custody of the juvenile was removed.

(3) At the end of the trial home placement, ~~the court~~:

(A) The court shall either place custody of the juvenile with the parent of the juvenile or the person from whom custody of the

1 juvenile was removed, or

2 (B) ~~the~~ The department shall return the juvenile to a
3 licensed or approved foster home, shelter, or facility or an exempt child
4 welfare agency as defined in § 9-28-402.

5

6 SECTION 10. Arkansas Code § 9-28-108(d), concerning trial home
7 placements with a parent of a juvenile or a person from whom custody of the
8 juvenile was removed, is amended to read as follows:

9 (d)(1)(A) ~~A juvenile who is in the custody of the department shall be~~
10 ~~allowed to have a trial placement with the juvenile's parents or the person~~
11 ~~from whom custody was removed for a time period not to exceed sixty (60) days~~
12 A court may order a juvenile who is in the custody of the department to be
13 placed in a trial home placement with a parent of the juvenile or the person
14 from whom custody of the juvenile was removed for:

15 (i) No longer than sixty (60) days; or

16 (ii) More than sixty (60) days but no longer than
17 one hundred eighty (180) days with the consent of the department.

18 (B) The department may place a juvenile who is in its
19 custody in a trial home placement with a parent of the juvenile or the person
20 from whom custody of the juvenile was removed for no longer than one hundred
21 eighty (180) days.

22 (C) A trial home placement with a parent who did not have
23 custody of the juvenile at the time of the juvenile's removal into the
24 custody of the department may be made only after the court or the department
25 determine that:

26 (i) The trial home placement is in the best interest
27 of the juvenile;

28 (ii) The noncustodial parent does not have a
29 restriction on contact with the juvenile; and

30 (iii) There are no safety concerns related to the
31 placement after reviewing:

32 (a) The criminal background of the
33 noncustodial parent;

34 (b) The home of the noncustodial parent and
35 each person in the home of the noncustodial parent; and

36 (c) Other information in the records of the

1 department, including without limitation records concerning foster care,
2 child maltreatment, protective services, and support services.

3 (2) ~~After sixty (60) days, the court shall either~~ At the end of
4 the trial home placement the:

5 (A) ~~Place~~ Court shall place custody of the juvenile with
6 the ~~parents~~ parent or the person from whom custody was removed; or

7 (B) ~~Remove the juvenile from the parent or person from~~
8 ~~whom custody was removed and~~ Department shall return the juvenile to the
9 ~~department for placement in~~ a licensed or approved foster home, shelter, or
10 facility or an exempt child welfare agency as defined in § 9-28-402.

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State of Arkansas

As Engrossed: S2/25/19 H3/18/19

92nd General Assembly

A Bill

Regular Session, 2019

SENATE BILL 83

By: Senator A. Clark

By: Representative Capp

For An Act To Be Entitled

AN ACT TO AMEND THE REQUIREMENTS FOR UNSUPERVISED
VISITATION; TO ADDRESS THE TIMELY ENTRY OF ORDERS
UNDER THE ARKANSAS JUVENILE CODE OF 1989; AND FOR
OTHER PURPOSES.

Subtitle

TO AMEND THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
UNSUPERVISED VISITATION; AND TO ADDRESS
THE TIMELY ENTRY OF ORDERS UNDER THE
ARKANSAS JUVENILE CODE OF 1989.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

SECTION 1. Arkansas Code § 9-27-325(p)(2)(A), concerning the
petitioner's burden to prove that unsupervised visitation is not in the best
interest of a child, is amended to read as follows:

(2)(A) A petitioner has the burden of proving at every hearing
that unsupervised visitation is not in the best interest of a child.

SECTION 2. Arkansas Code § 9-27-325(p)(2), concerning a petitioner's
burden to prove that unsupervised visitation is not in the best interest of a
juvenile, is amended to add additional subdivisions to read as follows:

(C)(i) A rebuttable presumption that unsupervised
visitation is in the best interest of the juvenile applies at every hearing.

(ii) The burden of proof to rebut the presumption is
proof by a preponderance of the evidence.



1 (D)(i) If the court orders supervised visitation, the
2 parent from whom custody of the juvenile has been removed shall receive a
3 minimum of four (4) hours of supervised visitation per week.

4 (ii) The court may order less than four (4) hours of
5 supervised visitation if the court determines that the supervised visitation:

6 (a) Is not in the best interest of the
7 juvenile; or

8 (b) Will impose an extreme hardship on one (1)
9 of the parties.

10
11 SECTION 3. Arkansas Code § 9-27-325, concerning hearings held under
12 the Arkansas Juvenile Code of 1989, is amended to add an additional
13 subsection to read as follows:

14 (r)(1) A court shall set a hearing to address the entry of a written
15 order if:

16 (A) The written order is not provided to the court for
17 entry within the time specified under this subchapter; and

18 (B) A party files a motion for a hearing to address the
19 entry of the written order.

20 (2)(A) The court shall conduct a hearing to address the entry of
21 the written order within thirty (30) days from the date on which the motion
22 for a hearing to address the entry of the written order is filed.

23 (B) A hearing to address the entry of a written order may
24 be the next scheduled hearing in the proceeding if the hearing to address the
25 entry of the written order is being held within thirty (30) days from the
26 date on which the motion for a hearing to address the entry of the written
27 order is filed.

28 (C) The court is not required to conduct a hearing to
29 address the entry of a written order if the written order is submitted to the
30 court.

31 (3) The court shall reassign the preparation of the written
32 order as needed.

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35 /s/A. Clark

36 APPROVED: 3/27/19

1 State of Arkansas

As Engrossed: S3/11/19 H3/27/19

2 92nd General Assembly

A Bill

3 Regular Session, 2019

SENATE BILL 84

4
5 By: Senator A. Clark

6 By: Representative Capp

For An Act To Be Entitled

9 AN ACT TO AMEND THE LAW REGARDING PERMANENCY GOALS
10 THAT ARE AUTHORIZED BY THE COURT AT A PERMANENCY
11 PLANNING HEARING; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

Subtitle

15 TO AMEND THE LAW REGARDING PERMANENCY
16 GOALS THAT ARE AUTHORIZED BY THE COURT AT
17 A PERMANENCY PLANNING HEARING.

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20 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

21
22 SECTION 1. Arkansas Code § 9-27-338(c)(3)(A), concerning a court's
23 authorization of a plan to place custody of a juvenile with a parent,
24 guardian, or custodian, is amended to read as follows:

25 (A)(i)~~(a)~~ The parent, guardian, or custodian is complying
26 with the established case plan and orders of the court, making significant
27 and measurable progress toward achieving the goals established in the case
28 plan and diligently working toward reunification or placement in the home of
29 the parent, guardian, or custodian.

30 ~~(b)(ii) The court shall consider all relevant~~
31 ~~factors that may include without limitation whether the parent, guardian, or~~
32 ~~custodian maintained consistent contact with the department, participated in~~
33 ~~the case plan, followed the orders of the court, and visited the juvenile for~~
34 ~~a substantial period of time before the permanency planning hearing~~
35 Regardless of when the effort was made, the court shall consider all evidence
36 of an effort made by the parent, guardian, or custodian to remedy the



1 conditions that led to the removal of the juvenile from the custody of the
2 parent, guardian, or custodian and give the evidence the appropriate weight
3 and consideration in relation to the safety, health, and well-being of the
4 juvenile.

5 ~~(e)(iii) A parent's, guardian's, or~~
6 ~~custodian's resumption of contact or overtures toward participating in the~~
7 ~~case plan or following the orders of the court in the time period immediately~~
8 ~~preceding the permanency planning hearing are insufficient grounds for~~
9 ~~authorizing a plan for the juvenile to return to or to be placed in the home~~
10 ~~as the permanency plan.~~

11 ~~(d)~~ The burden is on the parent, guardian, or
12 custodian to demonstrate genuine, sustainable investment in completing the
13 requirements of the case plan and following the orders of the court in order
14 to authorize a plan to return or be placed in the home as the permanency
15 goal;

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17 SECTION 2. Arkansas Code § 9-27-338(c)(4)-(6), concerning the court's
18 authorization of a permanency goal plan for adoption or to obtain a guardian
19 or permanent custodian, are amended to read as follows:

20 (4) Authorizing a plan to obtain a guardianship or adoption with
21 a fit and willing relative;

22 ~~(4)(5)~~ Authorizing a plan for adoption with the department's
23 filing a petition for termination of parental rights unless:

24 (A) The juvenile is being cared for by a relative and the
25 court finds that:

26 (i) Either:

27 (a) The relative has made a long-term
28 commitment to the child and the relative is willing to pursue guardianship or
29 permanent custody; or

30 (b) The juvenile is being cared for by his or
31 her minor parent who is in foster care; and

32 (ii) Termination of parental rights is not in the
33 best interest of the juvenile;

34 (B) The department has documented in the case plan a
35 compelling reason why filing ~~such~~ a petition for termination of parental
36 rights is not in the best interest of the juvenile and the court approves the

1 compelling reason as documented in the case plan; or

2 (C)(i) The department has not provided to the family of
3 the juvenile, consistent with the time period in the case plan, such the
4 services as the department deemed necessary for the safe return of the
5 juvenile to the juvenile's home if reunification services were required to be
6 made to the family.

7 (ii) If the department has failed to provide
8 services as outlined in the case plan, the court shall schedule another
9 permanency planning hearing for no later than six (6) months;

10 ~~(5)~~(6) Authorizing a plan to obtain a guardian for the juvenile;

11 ~~(6)~~(7) Authorizing a plan to obtain a permanent custodian,
12 including permanent custody with a fit and willing relative; or

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15 /s/A. Clark
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18 APPROVED: 4/15/19
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