

# Permanency Support Program: an overview

The Permanency Support Program (PSP) is the NSW Government's reform of child protection and out-of-home care (OOHC). Under PSP, the NSW Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) and you work together to provide services to vulnerable children and young people (child) so they can grow up in stable, secure, and loving homes. The PSP requires you to work in new areas - preservation, restoration, guardianship, and adoption.

## Goals of PSP

The PSP has three goals:

- fewer entries into care - by keeping families safely together
- shorter time in care - by returning children home or finding other permanent homes for more children
- a better care experience - by supporting children's individual needs and their recovery from trauma.

## Permanency Casework

A permanent, safe, and loving home gives a child a better chance at leading an independent, successful life as an adult.

Permanency has four dimensions:

- relational permanency - positive loving, trusting and nurturing relationships with significant others (parents, siblings, friends, family, and carers)
- physical permanency - stable living arrangements and the connection a child has with their community
- cultural permanency – maintaining a meaningful connection to culture through taking part in cultural practices, connecting with family and community, and valuing connection to Country
- legal permanency - the legal arrangement for the child.

Under PSP, you work with a child and the people who love and care for them, to:

- identify the best permanency case plan goal for the child
- attain that goal within two years.

## Permanency Case Plan Goals

For children newly involved with the child protection system the order of preference for case plan goals are:

- preservation
- restoration
- guardianship
- adoption (for non-Aboriginal children)
- long term care
- adoption (for Aboriginal children).

When a child has a long-term safe, secure, and loving relationship with their carer, and wishes to stay with them, guardianship and open adoption are likely to be the best option.

## Permanency Coordinators

Permanency Coordinators are available in each district to help you decide on the best permanency option for a child, provide advice about working towards permanency and review progress towards a permanency goal.

See the Permanency Coordinator information sheet in the Understanding PSP section for more details including district contacts.

## Permanency Case Plan Goal Reviews

You lead the work with the child, their family and carer to achieve the permanency outcome. The DCJ Permanency Coordinator and you review permanency goals together.

Case plan goal reviews help to:

- jointly check in on the progress of the child's case plan goal
- assess whether a change to the case plan goal is needed
- identify any new areas where more support is needed to achieve the child's goal
- support culturally appropriate practice.

Case Plan Goal	Minimum Review Period
Family Preservation	3 monthly
Restoration, Guardianship or Adoption	6 monthly
Long Term Care	12 monthly

## Tailored Services to Achieve Permanency

Casework staff provide children with access to different services and supports that suit the child's specific needs. PSP service providers receive different funding packages depending on the needs of the child and their case plan goal. You can find out more about the packages in the Understanding PSP section.

## Guiding How Funded Service Providers and DCJ Work Together: The Permanency Case Management Policy

The Permanency Case Management Policy supports implementation of PSP. It clarifies the different roles and responsibilities of DCJ and PSP service provider casework staff in responding to child protection reports, assessing safety, case planning for permanency and supporting children while they are in care. It includes a policy statement, rules and practice guidance, resources and supplementary policies (such as away from placement).

## Permanency Casework with Aboriginal Children

Great practice that supports Aboriginal children to remain connected to family, country and culture is critical. The Aboriginal Case Management Policy supports practitioners to engage early with Aboriginal families to shape case planning and identify solutions to keep children safe with their family and community. DCJ is

working with AbSec and key stakeholders to develop practical guidance for practitioners so your work with Aboriginal children:

- is child focused
- facilitates Aboriginal family-led decision making
- values community involvement, including self-determination and advocacy
- is culturally embedded
- delivers holistic services
- is oriented to prevent harm and keep families together
- is accountable to Aboriginal peoples for the outcomes achieved.