



From Concurrent Planning, by Linda Katz, Norma Spoonemore, and Chris Robinson, 1994. Revised 2000.

## **PRINCIPLES OF CONCURRENT PERMANENCY PLANNING**

### **Success Redefined:**

- Early permanency for children is the goal

### **Differential Assessment and Prognostic Case Review:**

- Culturally respectful family and child assessments – strengths, needs, core problems
- Tentative, reasoned hypothesis about the probability of the child's returning home, and the family's capacity to benefit from reunification services, and the need for an alternative plan.

### **Full Disclosure:**

- Respectful, candid discussion early on about impact of foster care on children, clarity about birth parents' rights and responsibilities, supports agency will provide, permanency options, and consequences of not following through with case plan.
- Open, honest discussions with all parties – biological families, relatives, foster/adoptive families, attorneys, other service providers.
- Use of family group decision-making/conferencing strategies to involve families in early planning.

### **Motivating Parents to Change:**

- The role of the worker is to engage families in planning to motivate them to change and support the process of change.
- The role of the parent and/or family is to change.

### **Frequent Parent-Child Visitation:**

- Parents who visit regularly have the best chance of reunification with their children.
- The more structured the visitation plan, the more likely parents will participate.
- Involving foster parents in parent-child visits promotes more supportive relationships.

### **Plan A and Plan B – Resource Families:**

- Having a back up contingency plan
- Early search for and involvement of immediate and extended family
- Foster parents as permanency resources if reunification doesn't work out
- Partnerships between biological parents, agency workers and foster parents.

### **Written Agreements, Scrupulous Documentation and Timely Case Review:**

- Short term immediate goals and long-term permanency goals – Who will do what, when and how.
- Service linkages are key – drug treatment, domestic violence, mental health, family support.
- Writing down goals, tasks and time frames helps motivate parents to follow through
- Documentation of services provided and case progress - behaviors, not promises is the only evidence that can be reported on in court.
- Early and ongoing case review to assess progress, review continuing needs, plan for the future.

### **Legal/Social Work Collaboration:**

- Consideration of due process and parental rights when children first placed in care.
- Early determination of paternity and search for relatives, absent parents.
- Consultation and support from legal staff assures legally sound casework and case planning.
- A good social work plan is a good legal plan.
- Use of non-adversarial child welfare mediation strategies to resolve conflicts.

*Adapted from Concurrent Planning Materials of Lutheran Social Services of Washington and Idaho*