

## Center for Child Welfare Website

### Florida Permanency Roundtables (PRTs)



#### **What is a Permanency Roundtable?**

Permanency Roundtables (PRTs) are structured professional case consultations with a threefold purpose:

- To develop an aggressive, innovative permanency action plan for the subject child or sibling group;
- To provide case-centered “learning labs” for staff skills development; and
- To identify recurring systemic barriers to the attainment of permanency.

PRTs are intended to be supportive of caseworkers and supervisors, to give them an opportunity to focus solely on the permanency needs of one child or sibling group with the help of a group of agency experts.

PRTs always have a prospective orientation: participants do not critique prior casework activities; they simply strive to understand the current needs and situation of a child or children as a basis for creating a realistic plan for expedited legal permanency (i.e. reunification with the birth family, guardianship, or adoption).

To learn more about the purpose, values and goals of a PRT, you can view the Power Point Presentation. ([Click to view slides](#))

## **Permanency Roundtables in Florida**

Permanency Roundtables were originally developed by Casey Family Programs and the Georgia Department of Human Services (DHS). Over 125 jurisdictions in 35 states have implemented PRTs since 2009.

In partnership with Casey Family Programs and with the support of the Department of Children and Families (DCF), Florida Community Based Care Lead Agencies (CBCs) began implementing Permanency Roundtables in 2009. As of March, 2014, the following CBCs are part of the Florida PRT initiative:

- The first three CBCs to implement the initiative started in 2009:
  - ChildNet
  - Family Support Services of North Florida
  - Partnership for Strong Families
  
- An additional three CBCs were added in 2011:
  - CBC of Central Florida
  - Community Partnership for Children
  - Kids Central
  
- Two additional CBCs were added in 2013:
  - Eckerd Community Alternatives
  - Our Kids

## **Cold Case Component to Permanency Roundtables**

A Cold Case component is added to permanency roundtables for children who are most likely to age out of foster care without legal permanency. These youth often have many years in care and have been through multiple placements. They often are “legal orphans” whose parental rights have been terminated, but who have not found legal permanency.

This component is helpful in identifying relatives, legal barriers to permanency and having another set of eyes looking at the case and coming up with ideas to achieve permanency for children in care.

The following are key components of the cold case initiative in Florida:

- Analytics are used to identify children who are most likely to age out of the foster care system without a family

- A DCF Children’s Legal Services (CLS) attorney uses a review tool to conduct a thorough analysis of the case file prior to the PRT and presents the information at the PRT
- Additional resources are available to find potential permanency resources, most specifically, Casey is funding a Private Investigator in Florida to assist CLS in the process

In 2012, Florida DCF CLS began piloting the cold case component in Gainesville with Partnership for Strong Families. Starting in 2014, DCF CLS is implementing the cold case component in all Florida PRT sites.

The cold case component is another tool used to expedite permanency. Involving attorneys in the process strengthens the team that works to exhaust all options in finding permanency for children.

### Helpful Handouts

1. [When A Teen Says “NO” to Permanence](#)
2. [Six Phases of a PRT](#)
3. [Permanency at a Glance: Implications for access to independent living services for youth achieving permanency](#)
4. Journal Article: 24-month update on the impact of roundtables of permanency for youth in foster care:

Davis, C.W., Houston, M., Morgan, L.J., O’Brien, K., Rogg, C.S. & White, C.R.

(2013). 24-month update on the impact of roundtables of permanency for youth in foster care. *Children and Youth Services Review* (35), 2128-2134.

## **Success Stories**

Florida PRTs, along with the hard work of committed case managers, supervisors, attorneys, GALs and judges, have resulted in numerous success stories. Many children have found forever families, and many older teens have been adopted, returned safely to their parents and made positive, lifelong connections.

Below we have highlighted a few success stories\* illustrating what can happen during and following a PRT, when a group of dedicated staff work together and relentlessly pursue permanency for a child. (\*names have been changed)

### **Trevor**

Trevor was born in the Virgin Islands and lived with his maternal grandmother for most of his life. When his grandmother became ill, Trevor and his mother traveled to the US where Trevor was placed with his father. Trevor's mother only remained in the US a short while before relocating to England with the promise to have Trevor join her two years later. This was seven years ago. Trevor was arrested several times in 2012 after escalating behaviors that his father and step-mother were unable to handle. He was placed in foster care in June 2012 and given an APPLA goal.

Trevor and his father did not get along and the case management organization (CMO) team was at a dead end on how to help Trevor achieve legal permanency. During a PRT held in August, 2013, the team decided that Trevor needed to go home to his father and step-mother. The team reached out to relatives and began working on reconnecting Trevor with his family.

Trevor began visits with a paternal aunt. During the visits he would see his father and step-mother. In October 2013 Trevor, was disrupting from his group home placement. The case manager worked with Trevor's father and was able to approve a visit. In November 2013, a Judge ordered that Trevor could stay with his father and step-mother for an extended visit. Trevor had hesitations about being reunified because he did not want to lose his Independent Living Service (ILS) benefits. The case manager worked with ILS and educated Trevor and his father on the new ILS laws and how legal permanency would impact Trevor's access to ILS services.

Trevor was officially reunified with his father in February, 2014.

### **Taylor, Brianna, Madison and Hannah**

Taylor, Brianna, Madison and Hanna were all removed from their home in July, 2011 due to substance abuse and domestic violence. The girls were placed with a non-relative while the parents were slow to complete their case plan and

inconsistent with visits. The non-relative was unable to continue caring for the girls and they were moved to several additional non-relative placements prior to being placed in foster care.

As a result of the PRT, case management encouraged the parents to complete their case plan and worked hard to engage them in services. The mother relocated out of state where she had more family support and was finally able to complete her case plan. The ICPC process was a bit of a barrier but through persistence and outside of the box thinking, the girls were reunified with their mother on 12/12/13.

### Daniel

Daniel is a 17 year old, Caucasian, who was removed from his biological parents in 2002 at the age of six and has remained under DCF supervision for the past 11 years. Daniel had been in over fifty placements since being adjudicated dependent on September 25, 2002. He has cycled through traditional foster homes, group homes, residential treatment facilities, and juvenile detention facilities. His mother's parental rights were terminated in 2004 and his father's parental rights were terminated in 2005. In May of 2011 the agency held the initial permanency roundtable meeting in regards to Daniel's case.

After several years and attempts to identify a pre adoptive placement conducive to Daniel's needs, and attempts to engage him that adoption was the best option for him, Daniel finally agreed he would be open to adoption with a person he was previously connected to as an 11 year-old adolescent. The prospective parent, Mr. Douglas, was introduced to Daniel after seeing him on the *Jacksonville's Children* news program and though Mr. Douglas wasn't ready to adopt at the time he remembers seeing Daniel again later on the Heart Gallery website that features children available for adoption. Daniel's profile was removed and replaced a few times so Mr. Douglas assumed he had been adopted. However, he did not hear about Daniel again until September 2011 when he was contacted by the adoption recruiter. In attempt to find a positive permanent connection for Daniel, the recruiter asked Mr. Douglas if he'd be interested in being a pen pal to a child available for adoption and Mr. Douglas inquired about Daniel. He began writing letters to Daniel when the child was incarcerated in a DJJ facility in 2011. At first Daniel was resistant to the idea of a pen pal, however Mr. Douglas continued to write Daniel letters and their relationship began to grow.

The first time Mr. Douglas met Daniel in person was when he was incarcerated at the end of 2011. Daniel also began writing letters back to Mr. Douglas at this time. Mr. Douglas has tracked Daniel's placement changes in Florida prisons and had been able to visit with Daniel five times since 2011. He stated that Daniel continued to write letters that were open and from the heart, and he felt he and Daniel began building a true trusting relationship. Mr. Douglas reported that he is

award of Daniel's needs, and has had full disclosure about his trauma and behaviors, but also truly believes that this child needs someone stable and consistent in his life. He stated that Daniel is a victim of his upbringing and the difficult situations he has been through.

In 2013, just two months prior to turning 18 years old, Daniel was adopted by Mr. Douglas. They continue to build their bond despite Daniel's continued incarceration. Mr. Douglas' commitment to Daniel is to continue to provide him with love and support as his Father.

### **Contact Information**

If you're interested in learning more about Permanency Roundtables or would like to implement in your area, please contact Linda Jewell Morgan, Senior Director of Strategic Consulting for Casey Family Programs. Linda can be reached at 727-455-4077 or [LMorgan@casey.org](mailto:LMorgan@casey.org).