

STANDARDIZED COURT REPORTS

**Ensuring Safety, Timely Permanency,
and Child and Family Well-Being**

June 1, 2012

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PURPOSE

- **ENSURE COMPLIANCE WITH REQUIREMENTS OF P.L. 105-98, THE ADOPTION AND SAFE FAMILIES ACT OF 1997 (ASFA)**
- **PROMOTE CONSISTENCY WITHIN THE CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM**
- **REDUCE CASEWORKER WORKLOAD**
- **IMPROVED OUTCOMES TO CHILDREN AND FAMILIES**

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SUMMARY OF RELATED ADOPTION SAFE FAMILIES “ACT” REQUIREMENTS

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The Act requires initial and updated case plans that outline goals and tasks relevant to remediating the problem that brought the children into care and services that will help ensure the *safety, timely permanency, and well being of the child and family.*

- **Initial Services Plan – ISP**
- **Updated Services Plan – USP**
- **Parent Agency Services Plan – Treatment Agreement**
- **Permanent Ward Service Plan – Treatment Agreement**

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The Act requires that the case plan be developed and updated *jointly* by the state agency and the parents.

If the parents are unable or unwilling to participate in the case plan development, the agency must document within the plan efforts made to engage the parents in the process.

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CASE SERVICE PLAN (Content)

- The case plan must include clear, achievable objectives, and timeframes consistent with the child's developmental needs. It must be written in a manner that is easily understood by all parties.
- When the permanency plan is reunification, the plan must clearly state the measurable and observable objectives. The parent must achieve and/or demonstrate what objectives must be met before the child can be returned to the parent's care. It must also state the support and services to be provided, relevant to correcting the parental behavior and living conditions that resulted in the children coming into care. The objectives must be specific to the individual needs and strengths of the parents and children, as determined by a thorough and competent assessment.

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CASE SERVICE PLAN (content cont)

- When the permanency plan is not reunification, the case plan must identify the alternative permanency plan, the agency's plan for and efforts in achieving the plan and related progress.
- The case plan also must clearly present the supervising agency's efforts to fulfill its responsibility of ensuring that children have a safe, stable foster placement, that is appropriate to their individual needs.

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CASE SERVICE PLAN (content cont)

- The plan should address appropriate services to be provided to address the child's assessed. These needs include educational needs, developmental needs, physical needs and/or mental health needs.
- The case plan should designate the frequency of parenting time, as well as specific objectives and activities for strengthening the parent/child relationship during that time. This includes listing activities the parents must complete in order to have increased or unsupervised parenting time.

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The Act requires periodic administrative or court review of the **case plan** at disposition and subsequent six month review (3 month in Michigan) hearings.

The periodic review by the court is the means by which the court is able to evaluate the agency's care and supervision of the children under the court's jurisdiction. Review focuses on the child's **safety, placement stability, and overall well being.**

The **Standardized Court Report** addresses each of these areas including the **reasonable efforts** made and progress toward achieving timely permanency.