



CENTER FOR SOCIAL SERVICES RESEARCH, UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY
CHILD WELFARE PERMANENCY REFORMS

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Implementation and Outcomes of Concurrent Planning: Quantitative Findings

3 of 5

This series of publications, *Implementation Outcomes of Concurrent Planning*, details the findings from a quantitative assessment of the practice and outcomes of concurrent planning in six California counties: Contra Costa, Mendocino, Placer, San Bernardino, San Diego, and Yolo. Cases of two cohorts of children entering care (1155 children total) were reviewed. The first cohort entered care in 1993 and 1994; the second cohort entered care between 1998 and 2000. Details on case and family characteristics, concurrent planning practices, and case outcomes over 1 to 3 years were gathered from case files. (For these analyses, the sample was restricted to cases continuing past the jurisdictional hearing and receiving reunification services, as these are the cases for which concurrent planning would be relevant; n=885.)

Finding #3: *Delivery and timing of concurrent planning practice elements is inconsistent.*

Concurrent planning is generally conceptualized as something that begins early on in the case. According to the literature, when a child enters care, a reunification prognosis determines whether there is a low likelihood of reunification. A concurrent plan is conceptualized and detailed in the court report for the dispositional hearing, which generally takes place in the first thirty days. Placement in a home that has the potential to be permanent occurs as soon as possible, hopefully within the first week or two of placement. Additionally, the reunification prognosis and concurrent plan should be re-assessed at subsequent review hearings, so that they can be adjusted as necessary based upon parental progress. To gain a sense of the actual timing of concurrent planning practice elements, we examined their timing for a sub-sample of children who were in care long enough to have experienced a six month review hearing, when a reassessment of concurrent planning elements could occur.

TIMING OF CRITICAL CONCURRENT PLANNING ELEMENTS

Concurrent Plan	n	%
Never documented	124	30.2
Documented on JD report only	86	21.0
Documented on later report only	54	13.2
Documented on both reports	146	35.6
	410	100.0
Reunification Prognosis		
Never documented	200	48.8
Documented on JD report only	34	8.3
Documented on later report only	92	22.4
Documented on both reports	84	20.5
	410	100.0

- **Many children do not receive these critical concurrent planning elements**

Over 30% of the children in this sub-sample never had a concurrent plan documented in their court reports, and almost half never had a reunification prognosis documented in their court reports.

- **Concurrent planning elements sometimes not delivered in a timely fashion.**

Concurrent planning elements sometimes did not occur until later in the case. While a concurrent plan should be outlined at the dispositional hearing, almost 13% of cases did not receive a concurrent plan until a later review hearing, and 22% of the cases in this sub-sample did not receive a reunification prognosis until a later review hearing.

- **Reassessment of reunification prognoses and concurrent plans not common.**

Reassessment, in which the prognosis and plan are made at the dispositional hearing and reviewed at a subsequent review hearing, was not common. About 36% of the cases in the sub-sample had a reassessment of the concurrent plan, and 20% of the cases in this sub-sample had a reassessment of the reunification prognosis.

- **Fost-adopt placement shows similar trends.**

Like these other critical elements of concurrent planning, placement in a fost-adopt home should be undertaken as soon as possible. As noted in Finding #1, this element was rarely used. Considering the whole second cohort sample again (n=500), only 31 children, or about 7%, were placed in a home intending to adopt prior to the termination of parental rights (TPR) hearing. In terms of the timing of this event, only 12 of these 31 cases were placed in the fost-adopt homes during the first six months of the case.

In order for concurrent planning to be able to influence permanency timeframes, the requisite thought and planning must occur prior to the termination of reunification services. It appears concurrent planning elements are not conducted as regularly, or in as timely a fashion, as has been recommended. There may be certain barriers to implementation of timely concurrent planning that have not been addressed in practice.