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# PERMANENCY HEARING CHECKLIST

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The questions below are taken from the book *Making it Permanent: Reasonable Efforts to Finalize Permanency Plans for Foster Children* by Cecilia Renne, Jennifer L. Fiermonte, ABA Publishing.

## Reunification

- Do you understand the case facts?
- What is the child's position concerning a return home?
- What does the case plan include and how was it developed?
- Did the agency involve the parent in case planning and support the parent's participation?
- What services are included in the case plan?
  - Level and quality of placement of the child
  - Counseling
  - Parenting Classes
  - Anger Management
  - Drug Treatment
  - Housing Concerns
  - Employment Concerns
  - Day Care
- Have the services affected the parent's behavior or skills?
- What services are not in place, why?
- What has the court ordered regarding visitation, and what is the status of visitation?
- Is sibling and extended family visitation taking place?
- Have agency caseworkers been diligent in implementing the agency's case plan?
- Have parents been diligently following through on the case plan?
- What happened since the case came into the system and the case plan was developed?
- What is different now?
- What needs to happen to make a return home possible?
- What has the agency put in place to reduce the likelihood of disruption after the child is returned?
- How much effort is reasonable?
  - Case by case determination
  - Family history – how many time involved with the agency
  - Substance abuse, mental health issues – treatment history
  - In-house services

## Adoption

- What is the child's placement history?
- What are the child's wishes regarding adoption?
- Are the current caregivers and/or relatives appropriate as adoptive parents, and if so are they interested in adopting?
- If an adoptive resource has not been identified, what is the agency doing to recruit, identify and process adoptive families?

- Has the agency placed the child with adoptive listings and exchanges locally, regionally, and nationally?
- Has interstate adoption been considered?
- Are there any special issues that would make the child hard to place?
- Has information been provided to prospective adoptive parents concerning available adoption subsidies and other benefits?
- If any families have started the approval process and been rejected, what are the reasons for the rejection?
- Is the home study complete?
- Have criminal and child abuse backgrounds been checked?
- Has the agency collected the required documents from those individuals who have passed the preliminary hurdles?
- Has the agency shared all relevant information about the child with the adoptive family?
- What remains to be done, and what is the timeframe for accomplishing these tasks?

### **Permanent Guardianship**

- What are the child's unique needs, preferences and best interests?
- Are there compelling reasons why the child cannot or should not be adopted?
- Is this the best permanent guardian for the child, and is the guardian committed to staying involved with the child through the child's life?
- Has the agency shared all relevant information about the child with the prospective guardians?
- Has the agency conducted the necessary background check?
- Has the agency made sure the prospective guardians fully understand their rights and responsibilities?
- Do the caregivers have any questions about legal guardianship?
- Will there be ongoing contact with the child's parents, siblings or other family members?
- Will the agency be monitoring the family, or providing assistance in the future?

### **Permanency Placement with a Fit and Willing Relative**

- Will the child remain in foster care?
- What custody arrangement provides for the appropriate level of supervision?
- Should the relative adopt or do a guardianship?
- Does the child have a bond with this family?
- Are nonrelatives willing to adopt or accept guardianship?
- Will this placement help preserve family identity?
- Will this placement preserve a sibling bond?
- Does the agency have a complete picture of the family's situation?
- Do family dynamics compromise the relative's ability to safeguard the child?
- Has the agency observed the interaction between the child and relative?
- What is the relative's commitment to the child?
- Is the placement stable and long-term?
- Has the agency collected and reported to the court sufficient information about the relative's home?
- Has the agency completed ICPC when the relatives live out of state?
- Have necessary services been provided?

### **Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (APPLA)**

- Did the agency conduct a timely assessment and provide relevant services when the case first came in?
- Have other permanency options been fully considered and ruled out for valid reasons?
- What efforts has the agency made to identify and recruit a permanent placement for the child?
- What are the child's preferences?
- What are the compelling reasons why a more preferred permanency plan is not being selected?
- Is the proposed plan actually a "permanent living arrangement?"
- What support structures are being put in place?
- Does the child have any special needs, and what services is the agency providing?
- What efforts has the agency made to assess the safety, quality and stability of the APPLA?