

# Permanency Pathways

## Family preservation



### About the Permanency Support Program

In NSW, the government and the law help to protect children from harm and keep them safe. Keeping a child together with their family safely is the priority. If home isn't safe for them, we have to find somewhere that is.

We are making changes to how we support children and young people when they are not safe at home. The name for the changes is the Permanency Support Program (PSP).

'Permanency' means children and young people live in a safe, permanent home and are cared for. It also means staying involved with friends, family, community and culture. Permanency gives children a better chance at living happy and independent lives as adults.

We are working hard to support children to have permanency. These changes will make sure they don't miss out on the good things that come with a caring, permanent home. FACS caseworkers and caseworkers from other organisations will work together. The program helps meet a child's individual needs.



### What it means for children & young people



We want to make sure children and young people are safe and feel happy. We want to give them a caring home. The best way to do this is to make a plan with them to get a permanent home. This is called a 'permanency goal'. A permanency goal helps give children and families certainty about where a child will live in the future. A permanent home will be different for each child depending on what they need.

Caseworkers will work on the permanency goal with children, families, and other people who love the child. Children and young people will be involved in making the decisions. Everyone will work together.

### Ways to a permanent home

There are different ways a child can have a safe and caring home. These are called pathways. The permanency pathways are:

#### FAMILY PRESERVATION

This means keeping a child with their parents, family, or kin, when it is safe.

#### OPEN ADOPTION<sup>1</sup>

This is where a child becomes a legal member of another family for life.

#### RESTORATION

This means returning the child to live with their family when it is safe to go home.

#### GUARDIANSHIP

This is when a person or people other than the parent has the legal responsibility of caring for a child until they reach adulthood.

#### LONG-TERM CARE

This is where a child lives in a long-term care arrangement (e.g. with a foster carer or relative).

Family preservation or restoration are always the preferred pathways when it is safe. The pathway chosen will depend on the individual child and what is in their best interests.

<sup>1</sup> Adoption is not the preferred option for Aboriginal children

## Family preservation

Keeping a child safely at home with their family is an important part of the Permanency Support Program. Living with family helps children feel like they belong. It gives them the best chance for being happy and healthy when they become an adult.



Sometimes parents need help caring for their children so they can keep them safe. In family preservation, keeping a child safe with their family is the permanency goal. A caseworker will meet often with the child and family to make a plan and provide help. The caseworker and family can make changes to the plan if they need to. Talking to caseworkers can help families to learn new ways to deal with problems.



There are many services that can support children and parents when they need help. Caseworkers will often seek help from these services. They might suggest that a child or their parents visit a service for help with a specific problem. This is called 'a referral'. When a caseworker makes a referral to another service, they will make sure the family understands why and explain how the service can help. They also help make the family feel comfortable when they meet with the service.



Children often have other family members and friends who care about them. A caseworker can organise a Family Group Conference to bring a child's family and friends together to make a plan to keep the child safe at home. Family Group Conferencing also gives a child the chance to talk about what they want.



A child's parents might also sign a 'Parent Responsibility Contract'. In the contract we ask parents to give better care to their child by setting goals and agreeing to actions. The contract also has details of the support we will provide parents. Caseworkers will help to make sure parents follow the contract.



You can search for more information about Family Group Conferencing and Parent Responsibility Contracts on the FACS website at [www.facs.nsw.gov.au](http://www.facs.nsw.gov.au)

## Questions and help

For any questions about permanency and the different pathways, speak to a caseworker. Caseworkers can provide advice and help. They are there to support children, families and carers.

Email [permanency.support@facs.nsw.gov.au](mailto:permanency.support@facs.nsw.gov.au)

For more information about the Permanency Support Program, visit [www.facs.nsw.gov.au/psp](http://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/psp)

