

Permanency Scenario #1

8-year-old Tristan has been in care for almost twelve months. He was removed due to his mother's unrehabilitated substance use, leaving Tristan alone overnight, and unstable housing. DFCS offered the mother drug treatment and a parent aide early in the family's case. The permanency goal is currently reunification.

Tristan has two older siblings who were adopted by their paternal grandparents. (Tristan has a different father.) The paternal grandparents of Tristan's siblings have recently expressed an interest in being a permanent placement for Tristan after learning from the mother that Tristan is in foster care. They also want to initiate sibling visits as soon as possible. They live in a non-metro county approximately 50 miles away.

Tristan's father legitimated him early in the case, but he is no longer an active participant. He recently contacted the case manager (after no contact for the past 6 months) to say he wishes to have his sister, a teacher in Tennessee, considered for placement and possible guardianship. Tristan's father has been referred for a psychological, but he declined to participate in any assessments. He also recently moved and will not allow the caseworker to assess his current home. The only reason he will provide is that he works too much.

Tristan has been in the same placement since entering care. The foster parents wish to be a permanent placement for him – either by guardianship or, preferably, adoption. His placement is described as “a lovely home with affluent foster parents who live in a high-performing school district.” He has already been accepted into 3rd grade at the local charter school. Tristan loves his current foster home and wants to stay there “forever” with the foster parents' 7-year-old son whom he calls his “brother.”

Case plan progress: (Housing, drug treatment, plan for supervision) Up until the last review hearing, Tristan's mother continued to test positive for cocaine and meth during random screens. At that hearing, Tristan's mother made a tearful plea to the court and expressed that she is working very hard to get her life back on track so she can reunify with Tristan. She enrolled in a residential drug treatment program two weeks later. The program provides transitional housing, job readiness training and mental health counseling. The mother is expected to complete her treatment within the next 6-9 months. In her previous DFCS case with her other children, she left treatment after four months.

Discuss:

1. Evidence of “reasonable efforts”
2. Continuing necessity for and the safety and appropriateness of the placement
3. Compliance with the current permanency plan of reunification by DFCS, parties and any service providers
4. Efforts to involve appropriate service providers to meet special needs of child and parent
5. Efforts to eliminate causes for placement of child and toward achieving permanency
6. Is there a need to change permanency goal and placement, and if so, what should the new goal be (continue reunification with mother, adoption or guardianship with the paternal aunt, adoption/guardianship with the siblings' adoptive parents, adoption/guardianship with the foster parents?)
7. *Anticipated date of achieving permanent placement
8. *Relative search

*If there is time

Permanency Scenario #2

Catalina is 7 years old and her brother Gustavo is 3 years old. They were removed from the care of their mother, Rosalia, almost 9 months ago. The children initially came to the Division's attention because Catalina had not logged on for virtual learning for two months. During the course of the CPS investigation, DFCS assessed that the children were unsafe due to housing instability and the mother's inability to meet Catalina's special medical needs. Catalina has a GI condition and is feeding-tube dependent. There is no CPS history.

Rosalia is undocumented. She, Catalina, and Gus' father, Roberto, came to the U.S. when Rosalia was pregnant with Gus. Roberto left the family right after Gus was born. Roberto is believed to be back in their home country of Guatemala.

After Roberto left, Rosalia lost her job due to the employer going out of business because of the Covid-19 pandemic. Rosalia and the children were evicted from their apartment. They stayed between Rosalia's car and an abandoned utility shed near their old apartment complex. Catalina missed several appointments with the GI doctor and her health was declining due to improper nutrition. Gus was not yet potty trained and had a severe rash on his bottom.

There are no local family members to assist Rosalia with caring for the children. The diligent relative search lists a maternal uncle who lives in Florida. Like Rosalia, he is undocumented. Gus was born in America so he is a U.S. citizen. The case manager attempted to speak to Rosalia's friends and former neighbors about placement, but they refused to get involved because many of them are undocumented and fear they will be reported to immigration authorities.

Catalina and Gus are both thriving in foster care. Catalina is now participating in virtual learning and receives occupational and physical therapy. Catalina's feeding issues are being addressed and she has gained 11 lbs. since entering care. The foster parent has a medical background and is able to care for Catalina's medical needs. CAPS pays for Gus to attend daycare and Catalina is receiving skilled nursing services in the foster home. The foster parent does not wish to be a permanent placement for the children.

Summary of case plan progress: (Obtain stable housing/income, attend children's medical appointments and learn to care for them) Rosalia has been working in a local club as a dancer for cash for the past four months. She has attended about half of Catalina's medical appointments virtually. She and the children are supposed to visit at least twice per week at the foster home, but Rosalia did not show for at least 1/3, despite transportation being offered by DFCS. Rosalia is now living with her current boyfriend. He will not meet with DFCS because he is undocumented and does not want to provide any personal information for fear of being reported to immigration authorities.

Discuss:

1. Evidence of "reasonable efforts"
2. Continuing necessity for and the safety and appropriateness of the placement
3. Compliance with the current permanency plan of reunification by DFCS, parties and any service providers
4. Efforts to involve appropriate service providers to meet special needs of child and parent
5. Efforts to eliminate causes for placement of child and toward achieving permanency
6. Is there a need to change permanency goal and placement, and if so, what should the new goal be (continue reunification with mother, adoption or guardianship with the maternal uncle, other options?)
7. Relative search
8. *Anticipated date of achieving permanent placement

*If there is time