

THE PHILADELPHIA DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
Children and Youth Division (CYD)
Policy and Procedural Guide

Issue Date: March 9, 2010

TO: CYD Social Work Services Staff (SWSS)¹, SWAN Affiliates, and Providers

FROM: Dell Meriwether, Deputy Commissioner 
Pamela Mayo, Operations Director
Paul Bottalla, Policy and Planning Director 

RE: Revised Policy for Referring Children and Families for Services through the Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network (SWAN)

EFFECTIVE DATE: IMMEDIATELY

Purpose:

This guide replaces “Implementation of Procedures for Referring Children to the Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network (SWAN) Services” policy and procedure guide issued September 18, 2008. This guide describes the current policy and procedures for obtaining SWAN services for children who are committed to DHS, as well as SWAN services also available to any child who has been adopted regardless of their involvement with DHS.

Discussion:

SWAN provides adoption and permanency services to all 67 Pennsylvania counties and assists all DHS provider agencies in moving committed children more quickly to permanency. Permanency goals include the following: Reunification, Adoption, Permanent Legal Custody (PLC), Placement with a Fit and Willing Relative, or Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (APPLA). The services available through SWAN are described later in this document.

Definitions:

Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network (SWAN): A network of public and private agencies and organizations that have a common goal of improving the opportunity for timely permanency for Pennsylvania children.

DHS SWAN Coordinator: A liaison that assists DHS workers with expediting the SWAN process.

SWAN Prime Contractor: Diakon Lutheran Social Ministries is the prime contractor for SWAN services in Pennsylvania. Diakon may be contacted at 1-888-793-2512 or at www.diakon-swan.org.

PAE: Pennsylvania Adoption Exchange is a matching service that matches children freed for adoption to families who are willing to adopt.

¹ Social Work Services Staff (SWSS) refers to the CYD chain of command including Social Work Services Trainees, Social Work Services Managers 1, Social Work Services Managers 2, Social Work Supervisors, Social Work Administrators, and Human Services Directors.

Affiliates: Affiliates are provider agencies that provide permanency services and are registered with SWAN to provide the unit of services to county agencies.

Family: Families referenced in this document are caregivers who are willing to provide permanency to children.

DHS Social Work Services Staff (SWSS) Team: The DHS SWSS Team consists of the DHS worker, supervisor, and administrator.

Life Book: A book which depicts the child's life from birth to present, which entails pictures, memories, birth records of child and/or biological parents, and other important memories or details that may be important for the child to have as they leave care.

Legal Service Initiative Paralegal: This is an assigned person in the law department that will assist with the SWAN process.

SWAN Services Available to All Children in the Custody of DHS:

Child Profile: The child profile is a thorough review and assessment of the child's life, including, but not limited to, history, functioning, and special needs of the child. The child should participate with the DHS worker in the development of the child profile to the fullest extent possible. The DHS Team will ensure that the file is available for SWAN affiliates to review. This information is confidential and shall only be shared between agencies and with the prospective eligible family. Once a child profile is completed, it is valid for three years, and may include two annual updates in that timeframe.

Resource Family Profile: A Resource Family Profile is a process which entails developing families to become permanency resources for children in the foster care system. Once a Resource Family Profile is completed, it is valid for three years and may include two annual updates in that timeframe.

Child Preparation: Child Preparation for Permanency can be used for a child with an identified permanency goal. This is the intense preparation designed to assist the child in making the transition from foster care to the permanency option. It includes the development of a written plan by the affiliate, outlining the preparation activities conducted through a minimum of 10 meetings with the child over a six-month period of time. The DHS Team and the affiliate agency will collaborate on the development of the child preparation plan. A variety of techniques are available to facilitate the preparation process and the techniques must be specified in the written child preparation plan. This service may include the development of a Life Book. The DHS Swan Coordinator, in consultation with the DHS Team, will make the decision as to which affiliate will provide this service.

This service can be used to address some of the following situations:

- Issues of loss and grief, or issues with identity.
- Issues of trust with the permanency resource.
- Issues with adjustment to current placement or multiple placements.
- Issues of apprehension, fear, or confusion, etc. about current or future goals.
- Feelings of shame related to being in placement or other trauma.

Child Specific Recruitment: Child Specific Recruitment (CSR) is for children who have no identified family resource. Once identified, the DHS Team refers the child to SWAN for assignment to an affiliate agency. The CSR requires a written plan between the DHS Team and

the affiliate agency that identifies activities and expectations to locate a permanent family who is interested in a specific child. This service is not to exceed 12 months.

SWAN Services Available for Children in the Adoption Region Only:

Placement: This service is referred for those children who are placed with a pre-adoptive family who have a DHS approved Resource Family Profile, for the purpose of creating a permanent home for children. The affiliate agency will provide extensive child and family preparation. It involves the implementation of the county placement plan. This service requires a signed Subsidy Agreement prior to placement and the filing of the Intent to Adopt within 30 days of the placement.

Finalization: Finalization services begin after children or siblings have been placed with a pre-adoptive resource home. The finalization of the adoption includes all services provided to children, the pre-adoptive family, and DHS which has the custody of children prior to the issuance of a decree of adoption by the court. Finalization services begin at the point of placement and include the subsequent supervisory period and reports and may include, but are not limited to, supportive services, home visits, supervisory reports, and the work done with attorneys and courts to facilitate the adoption in a timely manner.

SWAN Post Permanency Services:

This service is available for **any** family who adopted children, with/without DHS involvement, received PLC, or others who obtained legal custody of a child that may require a continuum of support services to ensure the family's permanency remains intact. There are three services provided by the SWAN: case advocacy, support group services, and respite care. This is a self-referral service; families will call the SWAN helpline, 1-800-585-SWAN (7926), to request this service. SWAN will authorize an affiliate agency to provide these services for a six-month period of time.

POLICY

Requirements Specific to Ongoing Service Regions:

Communicate with SWAN affiliates and participate in necessary planning. This would include, but not be limited to, providing access to information in case records that will allow affiliates to fully complete the tasks for which they are responsible.

Cooperate with court system and legal counsel (i.e. complying with court orders, applicable laws, regulations, and guidelines) to facilitate timely permanency for children.

Once it is determined that children would benefit from any SWAN service to advance their permanency goal or the Court has ordered a SWAN service, the DHS Team will submit a referral request to the DHS SWAN Coordinator within 10 business days to have services initiated.

- A Child Profile referral must be submitted when an FSP goal is changed to Adoption.
- A Resource Family Profile referral must be submitted:
 - When an **FSP goal** is changed to PLC.
 - When an **FSP goal** is changed to Adoption **and** the child is placed with a family who has been identified as the adoptive resource.
- The DHS Team should consult with the assigned Adoption Supervisor and the DHS SWAN Coordinator about other appropriate referrals for SWAN services.

Child Profiles must be completed by the affiliate within 90 calendar days of assignment to the affiliate, or within any other timeframe stipulated in a court order.

- The DHS Team must make the case record available for SWAN affiliates to review in order to complete the Child Profile.

Once SWAN services have been completed to the satisfaction of the DHS Team, the DHS Payment Authorization Form will be submitted to the DHS SWAN Coordinator, confirming that the work is completed accurately and approving the payment.

Requirements Specific to the Adoption Social Work Services Team:

Make a determination whether or not to approve Resource Family Profile documents within 10 business days of receiving them from the affiliate agency.

Ensure Child Specific Recruitment activities are provided for children without identified prospective adoptive families.

Share the child profile with the prospective adoptive family's agency.

Review Resource Family Profiles and make a timely decision in selecting a family for child placement.

Assure that families are aware of community resources and supports, as well as benefits available through the Pennsylvania Adoption Opportunities Act, the Federal Adoption Tax Credit and The Adoption Assistance Regulations.

When an affiliate agency is involved, cooperate with the agency supervising the prospective family to assure smooth placement transition toward permanency for the child and family.

Remain informed and collaborate with the affiliate agency on the child's progress following placement and make reasonable efforts to finalize adoptions in a timely manner.

Determine whether to consent to the adoption, based on supervisory reports, and if so, to provide consent and other necessary legal documents for timely finalization.

Provide information to the family regarding post-permanency services and how to access them from the SWAN Helpline.

Adoption workers must submit SWAN referral forms to the Adoption Program Analyst.

SWAN affiliates will submit Adoption Region child and family profiles to the Adoption Program Analyst.

Adoption workers will submit the Payment Authorization Form (PAF) to the Adoption Program Analyst.

When revisions are requested, Adoption workers will **only** notify the SWAN affiliates.

Procedure

All referrals must be made using the SWAN Referral form. The form can be found on DHS Central and in Word under Forms Word, Adoptions. The form should be submitted electronically to the DHS SWAN Coordinator.

Although the DHS worker is primarily responsible to ensure that the SWAN Referral form is submitted to the SWAN Coordinator within 10 business days, the DHS Team or the affiliate can make a request for referral via e-mail notification. If the request is made by the affiliate, the DHS SWAN Coordinator will verify with the assigned DHS Team that they are in agreement with the referral.

The DHS SWAN Coordinator will make the referral to SWAN within 5 business days of receipt of a referral.

Completed Child Profiles and Resource Family Profiles are mailed by the affiliate to either the DHS SWAN Coordinator or the Adoption Program Analyst, or if applicable, the identified PLC staff person who submitted the referral. They are responsible for distributing it to the DHS team.

The DHS Team will review and approve, or review and request, revisions to the Child Profile or the Resource Family Profile within 10 business days of its receipt. If no revisions are needed, the profile must be approved immediately.

- *The SWAN Coordinator or Adoption Program Analyst will maintain a tickler of SWAN work to be approved.*

If revisions are needed, the DHS worker will notify the affiliate and the DHS SWAN Coordinator via e-mail notification, with requested changes within 10 business days.

*The affiliate has 10 business days to resubmit the profile with the revisions to the DHS SWAN Coordinator who will distribute the profile to the DHS Team. **Note: For the PLC Child Profile, the DHS worker will contact the Law Department to obtain the name of the identified Legal Service Initiative Paralegal (LSIP) and notify the LSIP that revisions have been requested.***

The completed Child Profiles are maintained in the child section of the case record.

The DHS Team will collaborate with the Provider Team to determine the appropriateness of sharing sensitive information with children aged 14 and older, if deemed appropriate. The Child Preparation for Permanency service may be needed to assist the child in handling the information.

When the permanency goal on the FSP is changed to PLC, if special permission is required because the children are under 12 residing in foster care, or under 6 residing in kinship care, then the Request for Special Permission form must accompany the SWAN Referral form.

If the Court orders SWAN services, a copy of the order must be submitted with the SWAN Referral form.

For cases with a permanency goal of PLC, the DHS Team must deliver the PLC Resource Family Profile and Subsidy Agreement to the Legal Service Initiative Paralegal in the Law Department within 10 business days of approving it.

Completed Resource Family Profiles are maintained in the front sleeve pocket of the case record.

For Child Preparation services, the DHS worker will meet with the affiliate within 30 calendar days of the assignment to the affiliate to develop a written plan.

- *The affiliate agency will meet with the child over the course of six months for a minimum of 10 visits.*
- *A minimum of five reports are completed by the affiliate over a six month period.*
 - *The initial report from the affiliate should be reporting on the preparedness of the child for adoption and it should address grief and loss issues.*
 - *Three summary reports must be a detailed documentation of **all** sessions.*
 - *A final summary report should **once again** address the child's preparedness for permanency.*

Completed Child Preparation reports are maintained in the child section of the case record.

Questions regarding this Guide may be addressed to:

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