



**DHS
News
Flash**

First Year of Performance Based Contracting Proves Beneficial to Philadelphia’s Children

nency. Implemented on March 1, 2003, by DHS and its network of provider agencies PBC is as a key component to DHS’ permanency reform agenda. Unlike the previous system, in which providers received no incentives for high performance, PBC rewards providers that successfully move children to permanency.

Permanency in the lives of children has an immeasurable influence on their future, and is achieved in a child’s life when they have the security and stability that only a loving and lasting home can bring.

Under PBC, permanency is defined as reunification, adoption, permanent legal custodianship (PLC) or emancipation – when the youth aging out meets a specific set of benchmarks (education, health care, employment, etc).

PBC has changed the face of foster care services by increasing the permanency and stability expectations DHS places on its provider agencies in exchange for increased resources and flexibility to meet the new expectations.

Among the contractual expectations measured under PBC are the agencies’

The numbers are in, and Performance Based Contracting (PBC) is moving children to

acceptance of DHS referrals, permanency outcomes, and stability of placements. Non-Permanency is the measure of instability under PBC, and includes movements to higher levels of care, transfers to other agencies, runaways, and movements to juvenile justice facilities.

To support agencies in meeting these expectations, DHS has enhanced its investment in permanency by providing additional resources for emergency care, foster parent recruitment, permanency workers, aftercare, and placement stability.

Promising First Year

PBC’s early success is the result of sustained and heightened collaboration among all parts of the system—DHS, provider agencies, the Philadelphia Law Department, the advocacy community, and Family Court.

PBC data from the first year of implementation (March 1, 2003 to February 29, 2004) shows a significant increase in permanency and decrease in insta-

year periods.

While the number of children achieving permanency has increased, DHS remains concerned about minimizing potential delays and in achieving the annual permanency goal—which represents a raising of the permanency bar.

Working to Ensure Safety and Permanency

A major component of PBC has been an increased focus on Aftercare Services—designed to provide individualized, community-based, flexible support to ensure a successful transition for children achieving permanency from PBC placements.

Under PBC, provider agencies, DHS, and the entire service planning team, which consists of (family members, child and parent advocates) work together prior to the Court hearing to prepare a family-specific aftercare plan for each family.

Since plans are tailored for each child and family, they can be more responsive to family needs than traditional services.

Since July 1, 2003, more than 550 children have begun receiving individualized services

through PBC aftercare.

Data indicates that aftercare is providing strong support to children post-permanency.

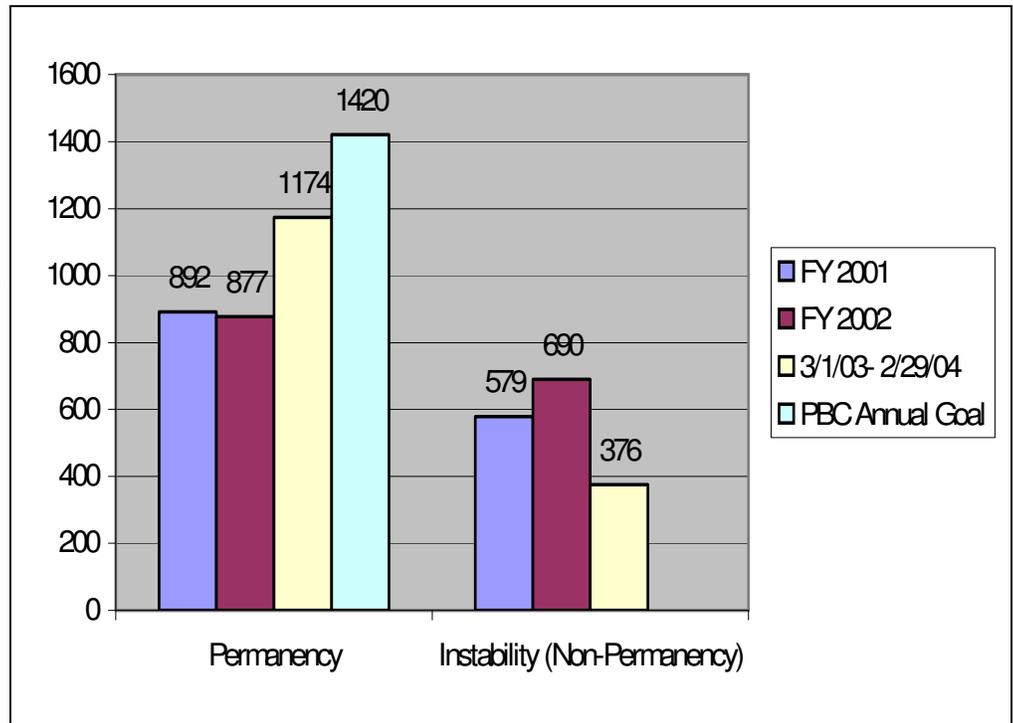
Over 300 more children achieved permanency during the first year of PBC implementation than in previous one-year periods.

bility (non-permanency) when compared with previous twelve-month periods.

Over 300 more children achieved permanency during the first year of PBC implementation than in previous one-

Post Permanency Support

- Significantly fewer children are reentering care in the months after returning home than pre-PBC.
- Reports of abuse and neglect post-permanency are infrequent, and are comparable to pre-PBC levels.
- Full aftercare training for all DHS and provider staff began in February, 2004 and will conclude in May, 2004.
- An Aftercare Unit has been created within DHS to provide support to closed cases receiving aftercare services.



With a successful first year of Performance Based Contracting implementation in the books, the challenge now shifts to achieving the ambitious permanency goals.

Be it reunification, adoption or permanent legal custody, the keys to successfully achieving permanency in the lives of Philadelphia children are the continued commitment and sup-

port of DHS social workers and foster care provider agencies, and a strong continuum of aftercare services.

Third Permanency Option Contributes to PBC Success

Permanent Legal Custodianship—the third permanency option has proven to be a successful component to Performance Based Contracting. As of April 22, 2004, 200 children have achieved permanency through PLC.

In 2003, Philadelphia was the only county in the commonwealth to implement Permanent Legal Custody (PLC) as the third permanency option with a massive training effort. Upon securing a grant from the Annie E. Casey Foundation and the Family Fellowship Network, DHS produced a Partners in Permanency Training video and accompanying facilitator’s guide that highlights the PLC option and walks social workers through a variety of scenarios. To date, more than 130 videos (both DVD and VHS formats) and facilitator guides have been distributed throughout the state and country to assist child welfare organizations in their permanency efforts.



DHS Welcomes New OJT Class

On April 8, 2004, DHS welcomed the 23 newest members of its staff. During a ceremony, the Social Workers, Social Worker II, and Social Worker Trainees were awarded certificates for successfully completing the On the Job Training program.

DHS welcomes the newest members of our team and thanks them for their dedication and desire to work with Philadelphia’s children and families.