



Are We Permanency Focused?: An Organizational Self-Assessment Tool

This tool was created to help organizations serving children, youth and families through residential interventions determine the level to which they are a permanency-focused organization. Content is drawn from the learning and experiences of Plummer Youth Promise in its own transformation toward advancing permanency progress and improving permanency outcomes for youth and families. The tool is designed to assist other organizations in identifying both areas of strength and need for attention as they undertake a similar journey of change.

Please read each of the following statements and circle the number that best describes your organization at this time. Spaces are provided to tally the score for each page and a total score at the end of the assessment. Based on the total score, the end of the tool provides a brief description of where your organization falls on a continuum of being permanency focused.

LEADERSHIP		<i>Don't Know</i>	<i>Not In Place</i>	<i>Emerging</i>	<i>In Place</i>
Organizational Culture	Vision, mission and values/principles reflect permanency as defined by the board, leadership, staff, youth, families and other key stakeholders.	0	0	1	2
	Definition of permanency addresses relational and legal status, quality of family belonging and membership and opportunity for family living.	0	0	1	2
	The board and staff at all levels articulate the mission and how permanency is critical in achieving desired outcomes.	0	0	1	2
	Strategic plan reflects permanency focus within programmatic, operational, training and financial planning elements.	0	0	1	2
	Organizational policies are infused with the value of permanency.	0	0	1	2
	Building Bridges Initiative Joint Resolution principles are foundational in guiding and informing organizational permanency efforts.	0	0	1	2
TOTAL					

LEADERSHIP

		<i>Don't Know</i>	<i>Not In Place</i>	<i>Emerging</i>	<i>In Place</i>
Organizational Strategy	A theory of change is articulated that makes clear how interventions delivered by the organization will promote progress toward desired permanency outcomes.	0	0	1	2
	Permanency interventions are rooted in proven practices such as permanency assessment; family search, identification and engagement; youth-guided, family-driven teaming; permanency readiness; post-permanency supports.	0	0	1	2
	All programs deliver services that are designed to address permanency needs of those they serve.	0	0	1	2
	Permanency is reflected across all modes of internal and external organizational communication such as program materials for youth and families and training materials or documentation tools for staff.	0	0	1	2
	Board membership includes family and youth voices of those who have been or are currently engaged with the organization's permanency-related programming.	0	0	1	2
	Program performance targets include an expectation to increase the number of youth discharged to legal family and safe, supportive parenting relationships in a timely manner.	0	0	1	2
Partnerships	Leadership advances culture of permanency through advocating with partner organizations for every youth to have a primary and concurrent permanency goal and timely progress toward safe and lasting family relationships and family living.	0	0	1	2
	Data sharing agreements for tracking permanency related outcomes exist across organizations serving the same young people.	0	0	1	2
	Critical partners and champions in permanency work such as state child welfare, juvenile justice and mental health agencies have been identified and engaged to support relationship building and collaboration.	0	0	1	2
	Goals, strategies, roles and responsibilities among partnering organizations have been clearly defined and processes are in place to address challenges that arise in collaborative efforts toward improved permanency outcomes.	0	0	1	2
	Frequent, ongoing communication occurs between partner organizations to ensure strong working relationships that support collaborative permanency work.	0	0	1	2
	Partnerships with youth and families are built and maintained to ensure ongoing input into permanency-related program design and implementation.	0	0	1	2

TOTAL

LEADERSHIP		<i>Don't Know</i>	<i>Not In Place</i>	<i>Emerging</i>	<i>In Place</i>
Environment	Organizational space is welcoming, family-friendly, respectful of privacy and reflective of permanency through elements such as photos of families and family-centered, strengths-based quotes.	0	0	1	2
	Mission of permanency for all is visible in community spaces.	0	0	1	2
	Youth are encouraged to include family pictures and mementos in living spaces.	0	0	1	2
	Designated on-site and off-site spaces conducive to connecting, communicating and visiting are prioritized for use by teams, youth, parents and families.	0	0	1	2
	Tours and informational sessions and written materials for youth, family, visitors, potential funders and system partners all include emphasis on permanency mission, vision and interventions.	0	0	1	2
ORGANIZATIONAL SYSTEMS		<i>Don't Know</i>	<i>Not In Place</i>	<i>Emerging</i>	<i>In Place</i>
Human Resources	Hiring practices make explicit the organizational focus on permanency and are designed to recruit staff that share the organization's belief in permanency as possible and critical for all young people.	0	0	1	2
	Job descriptions articulate both programmatic and documentation requirements related to permanency.	0	0	1	2
	Supervisory policies and practices routinely reinforce staff knowledge, skills and strategies that promote permanency.	0	0	1	2
	Onboarding includes introduction to permanency practice for all staff, with attention to how each staff role is connected to advancing permanency progress and outcomes.	0	0	1	2
	Internal performance assessments document permanency requirements and accountability across all levels of the organization (leadership, management, staff).	0	0	1	2
Finance/Budget	Budgeting and financial reporting reflects a focus on permanency (flexible funds for advancing permanency; algorithms to project costs and savings of permanency; etc.).	0	0	1	2
	Development efforts reflect commitment to advancing permanency practices and results-based leadership that drives progress toward achieving permanency vision.	0	0	1	2
TOTAL					

ORGANIZATIONAL SYSTEMS

		<i>Don't Know</i>	<i>Not In Place</i>	<i>Emerging</i>	<i>In Place</i>
Finance/Budget	Staff advocate and arrange for flexible funding to provide "whatever it takes" to increase connection, communication, spending time with, relationship building and parenting practice between youth and parent, family and/or caring adults (such as travel vouchers, Uber, hotel, meal vouchers, etc.).	0	0	1	2
	Funding for dedicated permanency staff is built into budgets to ensure all programs have adequate resources to implement and support permanency work.	0	0	1	2
	Appropriate staff to youth ratios is supported in the budget in a manner that allows adequate time for staff to engage in permanency-related practices and adequately document their work and youth progress toward desired permanency outcomes.	0	0	1	2
	Adequate resources are allocated to support a robust evaluation of permanency interventions and data collection and reporting system, ensuring access to necessary technology and tools to effectively collect and make use of permanency related data.	0	0	1	2
Data Collection & Reporting	Measurable goals and outcomes aligned with the permanency intervention model are identified and tracked over time for individuals and across programs.	0	0	1	2
	All programs assess and document progress toward permanency with a uniform tool that includes age/program specific evidence of progress and that explicitly reinforces permanency practice in use of language and design.	0	0	1	2
	All youth have a primary and concurrent permanency goal that leads to parenting relationships and family living with permanency-specific outcomes embedded across all goal areas (e.g. increase in parental oversight/decrease in agency oversight).	0	0	1	2
	Permanency-related data are collected throughout engagement with programming – at intake, throughout intervention/treatment and after discharge.	0	0	1	2
	Progress toward permanency outcomes is measured by explicit behavior changes observed in youth and family that are aligned with the permanency model.	0	0	1	2
	Fidelity to permanency model is tracked and recorded in more than one location allowing for cross-form verification.	0	0	1	2
	Key elements of permanency practice are measured (team members, meetings, home visits, advancement of goals, relationship status, etc.) and documented with permanency tools that are used in treatment planning.	0	0	1	2
TOTAL		<hr/>			

ORGANIZATIONAL SYSTEMS

Don't Know *Not In Place* *Emerging* *In Place*

Data Collection & Reporting	Permanency-specific reports are compiled and used by all levels (board to staff) for interventions, treatment and outcomes.	0	0	1	2
	Data are used for continuous learning about what works at all stages of family and youth engagement with programming.	0	0	1	2

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Don't Know *Not In Place* *Emerging* *In Place*

Interventions	Intake process invites and encourages youth voice and participation about permanency hopes, strengths, challenges and plan; emphasizes the permanency focus of interventions; and provides youth-friendly materials about the approach.	0	0	1	2
	Youth-guided, family-driven teaming is utilized, and team meetings are encouraged to be early, often and inclusive of youth and family voice.	0	0	1	2
	Family search, identification and engagement best practices are applied early, continuously, consistently and persistently until a permanency outcome is reached.	0	0	1	2
	Permanency preparation and readiness best practices are used strategically and routinely with youth, parents and family members to increase permanency success.	0	0	1	2
	Youth and families contribute to goal setting and all individual youth treatment plans identify goals specific to permanency and reflect best permanency practices.	0	0	1	2
	Permanency is assessed at regular intervals and ongoing assessment and planning includes youth and their parent/caregiver.	0	0	1	2
	Youth-guided, family-driven interventions, strategies and tools are used and documented.	0	0	1	2
	Parent, family and/or caring adults are routinely invited, encouraged, actively engaged, facilitated and provided with concrete supports to participate in social, educational and/or community events with youth.	0	0	1	2
	Spending time with family (in program, at home, in the community) is prioritized and seen as essential in practicing parenting and relationship building and restricting time with family is never used as a negative consequence for behavior.	0	0	1	2
	All staff articulate and document each youth's individual permanency goals, youth behaviors related to those goals and more globally, to permanency outcomes.	0	0	1	2

TOTAL _____

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

		<i>Don't Know</i>	<i>Not In Place</i>	<i>Emerging</i>	<i>In Place</i>
Post Permanency Support	Organizational documentation and reporting includes the capacity to identify the conditions necessary for permanency at discharge and long-term.	0	0	1	2
	Youth and family voice are central to discharge planning, identifying critical ongoing supports and in post-permanency follow-up activities.	0	0	1	2
	Services are identified and followed up on to support youth in success in permanency along with life domains such as education, employment, health and community engagement.	0	0	1	2
	Status of parent/family engagement across all life domains is reviewed regularly and supportive services are identified and made accessible to increase engagement as needed.	0	0	1	2
	Post discharge data collection includes questions related to permanency that include legal outcome, living location and strength of parenting relationships.	0	0	1	2
	Discharge planning and post-permanency services and supports include emphasis on building, strengthening and maintaining family relationships and community connections.	0	0	1	2
	Permanency-related transitions are managed in such a way as to minimize the number and impact of transitions occurring at one time, with a focus on preparation and support for youth, parents and family members through the transitions.	0	0	1	2
	Transferring permanency work with a youth and family from one staff member to another or to an external provider is strategically facilitated to prioritize the transfer of trust and the working relationship in addition to transfer of case documentation.	0	0	1	2
Safety plans are created and followed up on that address physical and psychological safety, highlighting the key role of protective relationships in safety planning.	0	0	1	2	
Continuous Learning	Agency supports a culture of learning through routine training opportunities that emphasize direct application and supervision of permanency practices.	0	0	1	2
	Supervision is guided by core permanency competencies and promotes professional development of permanency-related knowledge, values and skills.	0	0	1	2
	Staff engage in peer-to-peer permanency learning and training through required activities such as internal permanency consultations and other activities designed to deepen permanency practice among clinical and residential staff and supervisors.	0	0	1	2
TOTAL		<hr/>			

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Don't Know *Not In Place* *Emerging* *In Place*

Continuous Learning	Best practice permanency research is routinely reviewed and reflected in staff training, practice, staff supervision and program evaluation.	0	0	1	2
	Data reporting is continuously used to inform and adjust individual interventions and global practice, including providing opportunities for ongoing staff training on how to utilize permanency data collection systems and tools accurately and effectively.	0	0	1	2

Page 7 TOTAL _____

Please copy your scores from previous pages to the spaces provided.

Page 1 _____

Page 2 _____

Page 3 _____

Page 4 _____

Page 5 _____

Page 6 _____

Add all seven page scores to calculate your final score on the line below.

FINAL SCORE _____

Score of 0 – 43: Your organization has initiated some critical components of becoming permanency-focused and recognizes areas for further attention.

Score of 44 – 87: Your organization is emerging as a permanency focused organization. Designing strategic goals to continue that momentum is critical.

Score of 88 – 130: Your organization has a strong permanency focus. Building upon these strengths can make your best permanency focus even better.