

City of Philadelphia



Council of the City of Philadelphia
Office of the Chief Clerk
Room 402, City Hall
Philadelphia

(Resolution No. 140706)

RESOLUTION

Authorizing the committees on Public Safety and Health and Human Services to conduct joint hearings to evaluate DHS Family Service Plan (FSP) policies and procedures, including the relevance of the FSP in reunification or alternative permanency planning goals for children and youth under DHS authority.

WHEREAS, DHS has reported an increase in the number of children in out-of-home placement. In FY-15 budget hearings, Commissioner Anne Marie Ambrose reported 4,551 children in placement as of March 2014. The average length of time that a child remains in out-of-home placement is also increasing; and

WHEREAS, According to the Foster Parent Handbook 2014 published by DHS, Family Service Plans (FSPs) are objectives that parents and children must achieve in order to create a safe home environment when DHS has substantiated or indicated a report of child abuse or neglect; and

WHEREAS, The FSP meetings facilitate group decision making regarding child safety and permanency for children and families. FSP meetings are attended by DHS case managers, parents, children who are at least 14 years old, child advocates and foster parents as well as legal representatives or advocates of any party to the decision making team; and

WHEREAS, A Journey through the Philadelphia Child Welfare System (appended), illustrates that when a parent achieves the FSP objectives, his or her child is reunified with the family. A parent's failure to achieve FSP objectives may lead to the termination of parental rights. In addition, noncompliance with FSP objectives will result in continued foster care placement, adoption or permanent legal custody of the child with a different family; and

WHEREAS, Numerous parents have expressed concern that despite achieving their FSP objectives, multiple times for the same objective, reunification with their children has

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been prohibited by DHS. Separating parents from their children is a traumatic experience which has devastating and lasting adverse consequences; and

WHEREAS, The delay in returning children to parents who have met FSP objectives and thus, mitigated safety concerns may contribute to the overall increase in the number of children in out-of-home care as well as the recent uptick in the average length of placement; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That the committees of Public Safety and Health and Human Services is hereby authorized to conduct joint hearings to evaluate DHS Family Service Plan policies and procedures, including the relevance of the FSP in reunification or alternative permanency planning goals for children and youth under DHS authority.

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CERTIFICATION: This is a true and correct copy of the original Resolution, Adopted by the Council of the City of Philadelphia on the eighteenth day of September, 2014.

Darrell L. Clarke
PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL

Michael A. Decker
CHIEF CLERK OF THE COUNCIL

Introduced by: Councilmembers Jones and Tasco

Sponsored by: Councilmembers Jones, Tasco, Kenney, Goode, Greenlee, Quiñones Sánchez, Bass, Neilson, Blackwell, Reynolds Brown, Johnson, Squilla, Council President Clarke, Councilmembers Henon and O'Neill