

Permanency Pathways Guardianship



About the Permanency Support Program

In NSW, the government and the law help to protect children from harm and keep them safe. Keeping a child together with their family safely is the priority. If home isn't safe for them, we have to find somewhere that is.

We are making changes to how we support children and young people when they are not safe at home. The name for the changes is the Permanency Support Program (PSP).

'Permanency' means children and young people live in a safe, permanent home and are cared for. It also means staying involved with friends, family, community and culture. Permanency gives children a better chance at living happy and independent lives as adults.

We are working hard to support children to have permanency. These changes will make sure they don't miss out on the good things that come with a caring, permanent home. FACS caseworkers and caseworkers from other organisations will work together. The program helps meet a child's individual needs.



What it means for children & young people



We want to make sure children and young people are safe and feel happy. We want to give them a caring home. The best way to do this is to make a plan with them to get a permanent home. This is called a 'permanency goal'. A permanency goal helps give children and families certainty about where a child will live in the future. A permanent home will be different for each child depending on what they need.

Caseworkers will work on the permanency goal with children, families, and other people who love the child. Children and young people will be involved in making the decisions. Everyone will work together.

Ways to a permanent home

There are different ways a child can have a safe and caring home. These are called pathways. The permanency pathways are:

FAMILY PRESERVATION

This means keeping a child with their parents, family, or kin, when it is safe.

OPEN ADOPTION 1

This is where a child becomes a legal member of another family for life.

ot responsible

RESTORATION

This means returning the child to live with their family when it is safe to go home.

GUARDIANSHIP

This is when a person or people other than the parent has the legal responsibility of caring for a child until they reach adulthood.

LONG-TERM CARE

This is where a child lives in a long-term care arrangement (e.g. with a foster carer or relative).

Family preservation or restoration are always the preferred pathways when it is safe. The pathway chosen will depend on the individual child and what is in their best interests.

¹ Adoption is not the preferred option for Aboriginal children

Guardianship

The Children's Court makes a guardianship order when it decides that a child cannot live safely with their parents. Guardianship orders may also be made when both parents agree. Guardianship orders help to make sure children have a safe home, and keep in contact with their family and culture.

Under a guardianship order a child is in the care of a guardian. A guardian is a person who gives a child a caring and safe home until they are at least 18. A guardian has an existing and positive relationship with the child or young person. A guardian could be a family member, a family friend, or someone who has been a child s carer.

A guardian makes decisions about all aspects of a child s care including health and school. They are

required to arrange visits between the child and their parents. A guardian will also make sure the child joins in with activities and events from their culture and their community.

Here's how guardianship happens







EXPLORE

Caseworkers discuss the best permanent option for the child.

If it is guardianship ...





PREPARE

Caseworkers means.

make sure everyone knows what guardianship



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DECIDE

If it is the best option, guardianship is set as the child's permanency goal.

The caseworker will prepare for the assessment. They will collect information about the child, their family, and the person who wants to become their guardian. They will look at all the information to make sure guardianship is right for the child.



ASSESS

A qualified person:

- hear the views of the child and the people who are important to the child.
- consider if the person who wants to become their guardian is suitable.
- consider if guardianship is right for the child.



COURT ORDER

The Court looks at all of the evidence and makes a decision.



APPLY

If FACS approves the guardianship application they will lodge the documents in the NSW Children's Court.



PROGRESS

Caseworkers collect evidence the Court needs to consider a guardianship application. Everyone involved in a guardianship application should have their own legal help.



Questions and help

For any questions about permanency and the different pathways, speak to a caseworker. Caseworkers can provide advice and help. They are there to support children, families and carers.

Email permanency.support@facs.nsw.gov.au

For more information about the Permanency Support Program, visit www.facs.nsw.gov.au/psp

For more information about guardianship, please call 1300 623 416 or email guardianshipinformation NSWFACS@facs.nsw.gov.au