**Section 316.120 Permanency Hearings**

a) The Department or its child welfare contributing agency will participate in permanency hearings conducted by the court at 12 months following the temporary custody hearing and every six months thereafter to assist the court in:

1) selecting the permanency goal;

2) reviewing the appropriateness of the services contained in the plan and whether those services, including sibling visitation and contact, have been provided as specified; and

3) determining whether reasonable efforts have been made by all parties to the case plan to achieve the goal; and

4) evaluating whether the case plan and permanency goal have been achieved.

b) The Department or its child welfare contributing agency shall provide, no later than 14 days in advance of the hearing, a copy of the most recent case plan and Visitation and Contact Plan, prepared within the prior six months, to the court and all parties to the permanency hearings.

c) If not contained in the case plan, the Department or its child welfare contributing agency shall also include a report setting forth:

1) any special physical, psychological, educational, medical, emotional, or other needs of the child or youth or the family that are relevant to a permanency or placement determination; and

2) for any minor age 16 or over, a written description of the programs or services that will enable the minor to prepare for independent living.

d) The Department's or its provider agency's written report shall indicate the reasons the permanency goal was selected and the reason the other goals were inappropriate and not in the child’s best interest.

e) If the goal for the child or youth is continuing substitute care the Department's or its provider agency's written report shall indicate the reasons the goal of continuing substitute care is appropriate and the other permanency goals are inappropriate based on the child's or youth's best interest.

f) The Department's or its child welfare contributing agency's caseworker is required to appear and testify (if called to do so) at the hearing and prepare a written report for the court, as outlined in this Section.

(Source: Amended at 48 Ill. Reg. 12195, effective August 1, 2024)