

# BC Permanency Framework

Achieving Permanency for Children and Youth



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This framework has been updated in 2021 to reflect the national standards identified in [An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families](#); the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples; The Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

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## MCFD Vision Statement

The Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) works with children, families and communities to achieve the following:

“Indigenous and non-Indigenous children and youth in British Columbia live in safe, healthy and nurturing families and are strongly connected to their communities and culture”.

## What is Permanency?

Permanency refers to a child or youth having attachments and connections to parents, siblings, families, communities, and cultures so children and youth develop into healthy, secure adults. Children and youth have better long-term outcomes when they remain with their families and communities.

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*“To continue to exist as Peoples and as Nations, the connection between Indigenous Peoples and our children must remain unbroken.” Union of BC Indian Chiefs, 2002, p. 5*

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There are various worldviews on the concept of permanency. Indigenous worldviews, for example, do not separate the child from family or community. When planning for Indigenous children and youth, it is important to think of permanency in the context of the child’s network of extended family and community members.<sup>1</sup>

Permanency should not be considered only in the context of caregiver relationships, but also with a broader focus on promoting connections with culture, community, land, and familial relationships (recognizing that familial relationships may extend beyond biological connections).<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> First Peoples Child & Family Review | v8 | n2 | 2013 Defining Permanency for Aboriginal Youth in Care. Stangeland and Walsh

<sup>2</sup> First Peoples Child & Family Review | v10 | n1 | 2015 Creating Places of Belonging: Expanding Notions of Permanency with Indigenous Youth in Care 74

## The Dimensions of a Permanency Plan

A permanency plan will always include the following four dimensions of permanency:

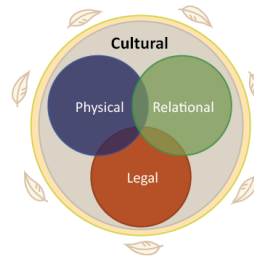


**Cultural permanency**, which can be described as an inherent right to have continued, constant connection to traditions, language and culture, regardless of what else is changing; The sense of belonging to one's heritage and cultural community is desired by, and a protective factor for, many young people. Cultural connection and permanency are particularly important for children and youth of Indigenous heritage.

**Relational permanency**, which can be described as strong, long lasting connections with a biological family member/siblings, a guardian, an adoptive family, community members or sometimes an individual from an organization like the Federation of BC Youth in Care Networks – anybody who gives positive, unconditional commitment.

**Legal permanency**, which is achieved through legally binding custodial arrangements such as family reunification, guardianship transfer and/or adoption.

**Physical permanency**, which is achieved by creating a safe, stable, healthy, and long-lasting living arrangement.



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*Youth and young adults have defined Self-Permanence as the ability to be secure in themselves, have the strength, courage and resiliency, to define permanence for themselves. See [AgedOut.com](https://agedout.com) for more information and as a resource when working with youth to learn about permanence and how to reconnect with family and community.*

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## What is Permanency Planning?

Permanency planning refers to the process of supporting existing attachments and connections and/or building new attachments and connections to parents, families, communities, and cultures so that children and youth develop into healthy, secure adults. Please refer to the circle process in the APPF when having permanency conversations. Processes such as Collaborative Practice and Decision Making are often helpful in drawing the team together and creating cultural plans for Indigenous children and youth.

Permanency must be considered in all planning with a child or youth, as well as their family, community, and nation. Efforts to secure permanency for children and youth must occur throughout all child welfare involvement.

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*“We have been caring for our children since time immemorial. The teachings of our values, principles, and ways of being to the children and youth have ensured our existence as communities, nations, and peoples. The values of our people have ensured our existence. It is to the children that these values are passed. The children are our future and our survival.”*  
Secwepemc Elder Mary Thomas

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## Permanency in Legislation & Policy

- The Federal Act [“An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families”](#) enshrines that permanency planning is a requirement for Indigenous children and youth. The legislative framework of permanency is laid out in:
  - [An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families](#);
  - [Child, Family, and Community Service Act](#);
  - [Adoption Act](#).



Permanency planning is a requirement in policy and legislation. The policies that guide permanency are:

- [Child Protection Response Policies, Chapter 3](#);
- [Out of Care Policies, Chapter 4](#);
- [Permanency Policies, Chapter 6](#);
- [Standards for Youth Support Services and Youth Agreements](#);
- [Adoption Policy and Procedures](#).

In addition, the following frameworks and guides also guide permanency practice:

- [Aboriginal Policy and Practice Framework](#); (may also add APPF Practitioner’s guide once approved)
- [Trauma Informed Practice \(TIP\) Guide for working with children, youth and families](#);
- [Family Preservation and Early Intervention](#)

## Principles of Permanency Planning

Permanency planning must ensure that:

- opportunities for family preservation and reunification are created;
- the child /youth maintains connections to their family, communities and culture;
- the child, youth, family and community guide the process of decision making;
- the best interests of the child are taken into consideration when making any decision;
- For Indigenous children and youth care providers are considered based on placement priorities, as established by s. 16 of the Federal Act ;
- the least disruptive Out-of-Care options, sometimes called Kinship care, are fully explored and assessed first;
- parents/guardians/care providers are supported to meet the needs of children and youth.

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*A youth in an Out of Care arrangement stated she appreciated the move from a foster home to her OOC home as it “removes the middleman.” She described how she no longer has to have her social worker sign consent forms, attend meetings and “feels more normal, like a family and feels loved.”*

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## Final Thoughts

Permanency planning is intentional and begins at our earliest involvement with a family. Our priority is to ensure lifelong permanency for all children and youth by collectively developing and maintaining strong relationships and connection with family, community, and culture. To quote what our youth tell us, “culture saves lives” and that permanency is measured in simple things like having a place to go on special days and someone to acknowledge milestones and celebrate your accomplishments, big and small.