

# **NEW JERSEY Child Placement Review**



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Child Placement Advisory Council**

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This information has been prepared to provide interested and involved parties with the information needed to understand the Child Placement Review (CPR) process. Any questions or concerns may be addressed to the Child Placement Review Coordinator in your county.

## **What are the key decision times for placement?**

<i>Within 5 days of placement</i>	DYFS files for a notice of placement with the court.
<i>Within 15 days of placement</i>	Court reviews case and issues order. Order is sent to parents, DYFS, and interested parties.
<i>Within 45 days of placement</i>	Child Placement Review Board meets for its initial review of the case. Interested parties are notified and encouraged to attend.
<i>Within 21 days after the Board's recommendations Are delivered to the judge</i>	The judge issues an order or directs a summary hearing be held in court.
<i>If there is a summary hearing</i>	Interested parties are encouraged to attend. The judge issues a court order at the end of the hearing.

### **If the child remains in placement:**

<i>6 months after child is placed</i>	DYFS holds a Regional Review.
<i>6 months after initial CPR review</i>	CPR Board holds a status review.
<i>11 months after initial CPR review</i>	CPR Board conducts a Board Permanency Review or Hearing (annual review). Interested parties are notified and encouraged to attend.

Child Placement Review Boards conduct a minimum of two reviews each year for all children in placement. They may also request special reviews according to the circumstances of the case. Interested parties can request a review or court hearing by contacting the CPR Coordinator in the applicable county.

## **What are voluntary and involuntary placements?**

In a *voluntary* placement, the parents or guardians voluntarily sign an agreement to place the child outside the home. The agreement is signed prior to placement, informing the respective parties of their rights and responsibilities in relation to visitation, support, planning for the return of the child, and the Child Placement Review process.

In an *involuntary* placement, there is a court order directing that the child be placed outside the home. Involuntary placement may be ordered for abuse and neglect, abandonment, homelessness, delinquency, or if the juvenile and family are in crisis. The Division of Youth and Family Services (DYFS) is mandated to present a permanent plan to the court, including reasonable efforts to achieve this plan for every minor child who has been placed out of home for one year.

## **What do Review Boards look at in considering the best interests of the child?**

- The appropriateness of the DYFS goal (placement plan); whether it will be achieved in a timely manner, and whether the current placement plan is beneficial to the child
- The history of the child and family, past and current
- The steps that parents agree to take in order to have the child returned (Service Agreement)
- Information sent to the Board by any interested party, including the child
- Reports from residential placement facilities, physicians, mental health professionals, educational experts (teachers, psychologists, child study teams), CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates), services providers, foster parents, and DYFS caseworkers

There are several different recommendations that the Board may make:

- The child should be returned to the parents or legal guardians
- The child should continue in placement but more information is needed before a recommendation can be made
- The child should continue in placement until the long-term goal of permanent placement is achieved

Copies of the recommendations are sent to those who received notice of the review: the parents or legal guardians, attorneys for parents and children, the child (when appropriate), the foster parents, the staff of the residential facility (if applicable), and the Division of Youth and Family Services.

## **Who may serve on a Review Board?**

Review Board members should be residents of the county in which they serve and should represent the various ethnic, racial, and economic population of that county. Members are appointed by the Assignment Judge for a provisional term of one year and may be reappointed for subsequent terms of three years. Each Review Board member takes an oath of confidentiality.

All volunteers must complete a basic training program of twelve hours given by the Administrative Office of the Courts and by the Child Placement Review Coordinator, a professional individual who works under the auspices of the Family Court Division Manager. Board members are required each year to participate in five hours of continuing education offered by the Child Placement Advisory Council, or the county or state court. Continuing education helps ensure that Board members have a current and operational knowledge of the complex and changing nature of the problems facing children in out of home placement.

## **What is a Child Placement Review Board?**

The New Jersey State Legislature established the New Jersey Review Board System in 1978. Review Boards consist of court appointed citizen volunteers who are charged with monitoring the cases of all children placed outside their homes by the Division of Youth and Family Services (DYFS). To help ensure that appropriate planning and services are provided to children in placement, the New Jersey Legislature established procedures for the administrative and judicial review of these children's cases. There is at least one Child Placement Review Board in each county.

## **How does a Review Board operate?**

In monthly or bi-weekly meeting, Board members review all relevant written materials and conduct interviews with interested parties. As advocates for the child, they examine each case from the perspective of the child involved and consider what is in that child's best interest with a particular focus on safety and permanency. Through group process and consensus, members arrive at combined recommendations that are forwarded to the Family Court Judge. The Board will support a child's return home only if the problems that put that child in placement have been resolved.

The Child Placement Review Board may conduct Permanency Hearings in cases involving voluntary placement agreements. A permanency hearing is held to address the permanent plan for the child. Under the current legislation, it must be held no later than 12 months after the child has entered placement, or after 30 days, when a determination is made that reasonable efforts to reunify the family are not required.

The Review Board meeting is an opportunity to voice concerns about the child's placement and future goals. Only interested and involved parties may attend; it is not a public meeting. Privacy is respected and all information is confidential. Interpreters and translators are available. Questions or comments mailed or telephoned to the Child Placement Review Coordinator. A listing of Child Placement Review offices/ Children in Court Teams is contained in this brochure.

## **What is the New Jersey Child Placement Advisory Council?**

The New Jersey Child Placement Advisory Council is a statewide organization consisting of one representative from each county Review Board (most counties have more than one Board). The Chairperson of each Review Board is responsible for designating the Advisory Council representative. The Advisory Council meets four times a year at various locations throughout the state and sponsors an annual state conference. The Council has specific legal mandates that include advising the State Supreme Court with respect to the rules governing the duties and practices of Review Boards, reviewing policies, practices, and procedures regarding the placement of children, and monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the Child Placement Review Act. However, *all* Review Board members may attend Council meetings. The Executive Board of the Advisory Council consists of 12 members elected by the county Child Placement Review Board members. Through a series of standing committees, the Executive Board members, reviewing current legislation, maintaining ongoing relationships with organizations and groups who have a mutual interest in child placement, publishing informational newsletters and reports, and arranging workshops and speakers.

## **How do citizens join a Review Board?**

Recruiting Child Placement Review Board members is an ongoing process. Participation in Child Placement Review can help ensure that children in placement find permanent, safe homes and caregivers in a timely manner. Anyone interested in further information, or in joining a Review Board, should contact their county Child Placement Review Office.

## County Child Placement Review Offices

### **ATLANTIC**

1201 Bacharach Blvd.  
Atlantic City, NJ 08401  
609-345-6700 x3560  
609-343-2290 FAX

### **BERGEN**

10 Main Street — Room 332  
Hackensack, NJ 07601  
201-527-2317  
201-646-2355 FAX

### **BURLINGTON**

49 Rancocas Road  
Mount Holly, NJ 08060  
609-518-2694  
609-518-2831 FAX

### **CAMDEN**

101 S 5th Street — Room 255  
Camden, NJ 08103  
856-379-2200 x3612  
856-379-2262 FAX

### **CAPE MAY**

4 Moore Road — DN 204  
Cape May Courthouse, NJ 08210  
609-463-6642  
609-463-6619 FAX

### **CUMBERLAND**

PO Box 866  
Bridgeton, NJ 08302  
856-453-4543  
856-455-4142

### **ESSEX**

Superior Court—Family Division  
212 Washington Street  
Newark, NJ 07102  
973-693-6621  
973-693-6660 FAX

### **GLOUCESTER**

PO Box 655  
Woodbury, NJ 08096  
856-686-7472  
856-686-7409 FAX

### **HUDSON**

595 Newark Avenue — Rm 203B  
Jersey City, NJ 07306  
201-217-5108  
201-459-2011 FAX

### **HUNTERDON**

65 Park Avenue — PO Box 578  
Flemington, NJ 08822  
908-237-5913  
908-237-5918 FAX

### **MERCER**

175 S. Broad St — PO Box 8068  
Trenton, NJ 08650  
609-571-4434  
609-571-4428 FAX

### **MIDDLESEX**

PO Box 2691  
New Brunswick, NJ 08903  
732-981-3369  
732-981-3336 FAX

**County Child Placement Review Offices**  
(continued)

***MONMOUTH***

PO Box 1252  
Freehold, NJ 07728-1252  
732-677-4313  
732-677-4365 FAX

***MORRIS***

Morris County Courthouse  
Family Part—Superior Court  
PO Box 910  
Morristown, NJ 07963-0910  
973-656-4317  
973-656-4303 FAX

***OCEAN***

Justice Complex  
120 Hooper Avenue  
PO Box 2191  
Toms River, NJ 08754  
732-929-2072  
732-288-7618 FAX

***PASSAIC***

Superior Court  
401 Grand Street  
Paterson, NJ 07501  
973-247-8494  
973-247-8466 FAX

***SALEM***

Child Placement Review  
PO Box 223  
Salem, NJ 08079  
856-935-7510 x8265  
856-935-9334 FAX

***SOMERSET***

PO Box 3000  
Somerville, NJ 08876-1262  
908-231-7600 x7607  
908-722-8535 FAX

***SUSSEX***

Judicial Complex  
Superior Court — Family Division  
43-47 High Street  
Newton, NJ 07860  
973-579-0740  
973-579-0679 FAX

***UNION***

Courthouse Annex  
Elizabeth Plaza  
Elizabeth, NJ 07201  
908-282-7625  
908-659-3591 FAX

***WARREN***

Warren County Family Division  
PO Box 900  
Belvidere, NJ 07823  
908-475-6157  
908-475-6175 FAX

**NJ CHILD PLACEMENT  
ADVISORY COUNCIL**

PO Box 983  
Trenton, NJ 08625-0983  
609-633-2581  
609-633-8125 FAX



**New Jersey**  
**Child Placement Advisory Council**  
PO Box 983  
Trenton, NJ 08625-0983  
609-633-2581  
609-633-8125 FAX

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**[njcourtsonline.com/cpr](http://njcourtsonline.com/cpr)**

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