

## Child Dependency Courts

Several barriers to permanency exist for children in the child welfare system, making it challenging to secure stable, long-term homes either through reunification with their biological families, adoption, or placement with permanent guardians. These barriers can delay the process and leave children in temporary foster care for extended periods, which can negatively impact their emotional and psychological well-being.



## FOSTER CARE ASSESSMENT PROGRAM (FCAP)

FCAP is a statewide program funded by DCYF and administered by Harborview Abuse and Trauma Center for dependent children that provides consultations and assessments for the most complex cases in the child welfare system.

- Provides brief phone consultations as well as standard and comprehensive assessments with the objective of achieving permanency for children and youth.
- Identifies and resolves barriers to permanency, and identifies evidence-based interventions to improve functioning.

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## COMMON BARRIERS TO PERMANENCY



**Complex Legal and Bureaucratic Processes:** The legal processes surrounding child welfare cases can be lengthy and complicated. Court hearings, investigations, and parental rights termination proceedings can take months or even years to complete. Delays in the court system, administrative backlogs, and inconsistent and/or multiple social workers, judges and attorneys can slow the process.

**Parental Issues:** Parents of children in the welfare system often face significant challenges that hinder reunification efforts, such as substance abuse, mental health problems, housing instability, or involvement with the criminal justice system. If parents are unable to complete court-ordered services or make necessary changes within a reasonable timeframe, it can create further barriers to permanency.



**Cultural and Racial Considerations:** Ensuring that children are placed in homes that respect their cultural, racial, or ethnic backgrounds can also be a barrier. Some adoptive or foster families may be hesitant to take in children of a different race or culture, and child welfare agencies may face challenges finding homes that meet these considerations while ensuring the child's best interest.

**Older Children or Special Needs:** Older children and children with special needs often face additional challenges in achieving permanency. There is a smaller pool of adoptive or foster families willing to take in older children or those with physical, emotional, or behavioral difficulties. As a result, these children are more likely to remain in long-term foster care or age out of the system without permanent families.



Overcoming these challenges requires collaboration by and among legal systems, child welfare agencies, and community resources, as well as efforts to address the root causes that prevent children from achieving permanency