

CHAPTER 90

AN ACT concerning child placement review boards and amending P.L.1977, c.424.

BE IT ENACTED by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:

1. Section 9 of P.L.1977, c.424 (C.30:4C-58) is amended to read as follows:

C.30:4C-58 Review of placements.

9. Each board shall act on behalf of the Family Part of the Chancery Division of the Superior Court in reviewing the case of every child placed outside the child's home pursuant to a voluntary agreement, to determine whether the best interests and safety of the child are being served by such placement.

Each board shall also act on behalf of the Family Part of the Chancery Division of the Superior Court in reviewing the case of each child placed outside the child's home by the division in accordance with a court order pursuant to P.L.1974, c.119 (C.9:6-8.21 et seq.), section 12 of P.L.1951, c.138 (C.30:4C-12), section 24 of P.L.1982, c.77 (C.2A:4A-43) or section 25 of P.L.1982, c.77 (C.2A:4A-44). The division or designated agency shall submit to the board within 30 days of a child's placement, a placement plan prepared in accordance with the provisions of P.L.1977, c.424 (C.30:4C-50 et seq.).

A board shall initiate a review of a placement pursuant to a voluntary agreement or in accordance with a court order within 60 days following the initial or repeated placement and shall complete the review within 15 days thereafter. A periodic review shall take place at least every 12 months thereafter.

The board may schedule additional reviews on its own motion, upon the request of any person listed in section 5 of P.L.1977, c.424 (C.30:4C-54) or upon an order of the court.

Notwithstanding the provisions of section 3 of P.L.1977, c.424 (C.30:4C-52) to the contrary, if a child placed outside the child's home attains 18 years of age or older and the child's out of home placement costs are being paid by the division, the board shall continue to conduct periodic reviews until the division terminates supervision.

All such reviews shall include, but not necessarily be limited to, the consideration and evaluation of such matters as:

- a. The appropriateness of the goal and objectives of the placement plan and anticipated date that the goal will be achieved;
- b. The appropriateness of the services provided to the child and to the temporary caretaker;
- c. Whether the child has siblings who are also placed outside of their home;
- d. Whether the wishes of the child were considered regarding placement and development of the placement plan, when appropriate;
- e. Whether the division, the parents or legal guardian and the temporary caretaker are fulfilling their respective responsibilities in accordance with the placement plan;
- f. Whether the parents or legal guardian have been afforded the opportunity and been encouraged to participate in a program of regular visitation with the child;
- g. Whether there are obstacles which hinder or prevent the attainment of the placement plan objectives and goal;
- h. The circumstances surrounding the placement;
- i. The appropriateness of the services provided to the parent or legal guardian or the circumstances which do not require the division to make reasonable efforts toward family reunification in accordance with section 25 of P.L.1999, c.53 (C.30:4C-11.3); and
- j. The appropriateness of the division's permanency plan and the division's reasonable efforts to achieve that plan, if an exception to the requirement to provide reasonable efforts toward family reunification has been established in accordance with section 25 of P.L.1999, c.53 (C.30:4C-11.3) or the child has been in placement for 12 months.

In the case of a child in placement outside of the child's home on the effective date of this act, the first review shall be completed as soon as possible, but not later than 12 months following such effective date.

2. This act shall take effect immediately.

Approved January 9, 2017.