

MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH  
PERMANENCY PLANNING PROGRAM  
FACT SHEET

History

In October 1983, the Michigan Department of Mental Health (DMH) with grant assistance from the Administration of Children, Youth and Families, put into operation a project entitled Permanency Planning for Children with Developmental Disabilities in the Mental Health System.

Permanency Planning helps children with severe developmental disabilities live in permanent families via family preservation, placement prevention, reunification and adoption services.

Program Description

The program staff consists of a director, 4 permanency planning specialists, 2.5 adoption workers and 2.5 trainers. The public and private sectors have teamed up in this effort. DMH, contracting with Spaulding for Children to provide training and with Lutheran Adoption Services.

FY 88-89 Workload Breakdown

1. Reunited with birth family	28
2. Adopted	10
3. Family preservation and placement prevention	147
4. Foster Care Review (see below)	305
Total Caseload	499 children

Foster Care Review -- Permanency Staff monitor children placed out of home to assure progress toward a permanency outcome. This review occurs biannually.

FY 88-89 Cost Comparison and Savings (Costs are average and include local, state and federal expenditures.)

<u>Reunification (28 children)</u>			
Foster Care Cost	458,265	Facility Cost	2,197,300
Family Support Cost	131,225	Family	131,225
Savings	327,040		2,068,095

<u>Adoption (19 children)</u>			
Foster Care Cost	310,966	Facility Cost	1,491,025
Adoption Support Cost	208,189	Adoption	208,189
Savings	102,777		1,282,836

<u>Family Preservation and Placement Prevention (147 children)</u>			
Foster Care Cost	2,405,891	Facility Cost	11,535,825
Family	698,588	Family	698,588
Savings	1,777,303		10,836,836

Net Saving to Taxpayer    2,207,120 (annually)    Savings    14,186,149 (annually)

Cost of Permanency Planning Program: \$594,000

Other Facts:

1. In total FY 84 through FY 89, 95 children have returned home and 45 adopted, at a savings of 1,558,100 to 10,107,580 annually.
2. Family preservation, reunification and adoption service costs are 68% below cost of foster care and 92% below costs of institutional care.
3. Savings are also incurred when children return home eliminating need to develop additional beds for incoming children, saving FY 88-89 \$180,600.
4. Staff diverted 11 children from facility placement to foster care FY 88-89, savings of \$682,951.

Impact of Elimination of Permanency Planning Program

1. Increase in demand and cost of out-of-home placement.
2. Children will remain in care longer and without a permanent plan.
3. Children with D.D. will be denied the due process protections guaranteed in the Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act of 1980 and Stabenow legislation.
4. Children without a permanent family will have little hope of adoption as DSS does not have the expertise to serve children with severe developmental needs.
5. Foster care and facility roles will grow.
6. Untrained staff will inaccurately diagnose and avoid the difficult issues confronting families, taking the path of least resistance and most expense (placement).