

Allegheny County Department of Human Services Office of Children, Youth and Families (CYF) Current as of February 2014

[Terms in blue ink are defined in Glossary](#)

CYF 015 – Reunification

Reunification refers to the process of reuniting children who have been in foster care with parents, custodian/s, or guardian/s who are (or are planning) to assume (or resume) physical custody and permanent responsibility for the care of the child/ren.

To achieve reunification, there must be ongoing contact among the child, sibling/s, and parents (or other custodians/guardians). Frequent visits can reduce separation trauma for children, preserve continuity, strengthen and support personal and cultural identity, and give children a sense of connectedness to their past.

Children receiving reunification services maintain important relationships with siblings and other extended family members through ongoing contact. Reunification services are available 24 hours per day, seven days per week depending on the service assigned.

Reunification Goals:

- Establishing and/or strengthening the parent-child relationship,
- Instructing parents in child management and child care skills,
- Working with the parents to develop leisure activities,
- Enhancing decision making and problem-solving techniques,
- Helping the parents develop community supports: child's school, church, and other community activities,
- Empowering consumers to advocate for themselves and their children,
- Helping the parents gain confidence in meeting the child's needs,
- Encouraging siblings to become comfortable with one another, and
- Giving parents an opportunity to decide whether they want full reunification.

Reunification Strategies:

- Reunification services begin as soon as the child is placed. Referrals are made to contracted agencies to complete a through family assessment to understand the family's current situations, and their strengths and needs and problems.
- The Reunification Service help the family to assess whether the problems or conditions that led to the original need for placement have been addressed and resolved; and what must be done to keep the child safe.
- All CYF providers work towards reunification through visitation, transportation support and family therapy.
- Family visits generally occur in the least restrictive environment, i.e. parent's home, parks, restaurants, and family support centers.
- Coordination of services may include: mental health treatment, drug and alcohol treatment, food bank, emergency shelter/housing, clothing, furniture and any other services identified.
- All families are given a phone numbers to contact their workers 24 hours per day, to facilitate intensive services.
- The bulk of the services occur in the consumer's homes.