

Permanency Roundtables: Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

What are Permanency Roundtables (PRTs)?

Permanency Roundtables (PRTs) are structured, professional case consultations designed to:

1. Develop an aggressive, innovative and realistic *Permanency Action Plan* for the child or sibling group.
2. Provide a case-centered “learning lab” for professional skills development.
3. Identify recurring systemic barriers to achieving Permanency.

How do PRTs differ from Case Staffings?

Child welfare agencies typically use case staffings to address a wide range of issues and concerns. Although sometimes used in similar situations, PRTs differ from routine staffings in the following ways:

1. PRTs provide a process for **barrier busting** by offering direct and timely access to policy and/or legal authorities. This allows agencies to address specific obstacles that may get in the way of achieving permanency that cannot be resolved at the local level.
2. PRTs tend to be longer in duration, providing a minimum of **two hours of uninterrupted focus** on one child or sibling group.
3. PRTs have a specific structure and facilitation style that encourages a **relentless quest for Permanency**.
4. PRTs feature the **participation of an experienced external consultant** who (intentionally) is not aware of local policy, resource constraints, or of how things are “always done.” This encourages a **fresh, open-minded perspective** that often contributes to identifying better action plan strategies and improved case outcomes.

Why are people outside of our jurisdiction dictating what we do locally?

PRTs support caseworkers and supervisors by giving them an opportunity to focus solely on the Permanency needs of one child or sibling group. The role of external consultants isn’t about dictating local practice, rather it is intended to supplement and enhance the expertise and strategic thinking of internal agency experts.

PRTs are future-focused. Participants do not critique prior casework activities. Instead, the process brings a “fresh set of eyes” to the case. The PRT team works together to gain an accurate understanding of the current needs and situation of the child before creating a realistic plan for Permanency. Although all PRT participants are encouraged to share ideas and offer suggestions, a case worker and a supervisor from the local jurisdiction ultimately develop the *Permanency Action Plan*. Participants consistently report that they find the actual PRT process to be cooperative and supportive of their work, good for the children, and cost-effective for public agencies.

Why don't youth, families, CASAs, attorneys and other stakeholders attend?

The composition of the PRT participant teams is intended to create a *safe place* in which agency staff can feel comfortable to:

- Call out barriers;
- Openly identify practice needs;
- Engage in intensive, highly creative brainstorming about possible Permanency strategies;
- Candidly discuss what might be adversely affecting the attainment of safe, timely Permanency for children in out-of-home care.

In many states, staff gathers to discuss the child's Permanency journey with families and other stakeholders as part of the *preparation process* for Roundtables. In this way, youth and families can contribute their thoughts prior to the PRT, and are better prepared for a deeper conversation post-Roundtable.

The most important product of the Roundtable is the *Permanency Action Plan*. This plan is considered a tentative draft until it is subsequently reviewed with the youth and other pertinent stakeholders. Most action plans include a recommendation to schedule a family team meeting to discuss the proposed plan to determine how to integrate it into the child's individualized service plan.

What happens after the Permanency Roundtable?

Follow-up is a key element for a successful PRT. Case workers and supervisors are expected to follow-up on all action plan strategies. Agency leaders are responsible for addressing how to eliminate barriers and make progress in resolving systemic issues identified during the PRT process.

I have a very busy workload. Why should I take the time to attend Casey Family Program's "Achieving Permanency Through Roundtables" training prior to participating in an actual PRT?

The Permanency Roundtable consultation has its own unique structure and process. Casey developed the APR training to give participants the opportunity to:

- Learn exactly how PRTs work including the roles/expectations of participants;
- Experience a Mock Roundtable; and,
- Become more familiar with the terminology and best practice techniques for achieving Permanency based on successful implementation in other jurisdictions