**Section 316.120 Permanency Hearings**

a) The Department or its provider agency will participate in permanency hearings conducted by the court at 12 months following the temporary custody hearing and every six months thereafter in order to:

1) select the permanency goal;

2) review the appropriateness of the services contained in the plan and whether those services, including sibling visitation and contact, have been provided as specified and, if not, why not;

3) determine whether reasonable efforts have been made by all parties to the service plan to achieve the goal; and

4) evaluate whether the plan and goal have been achieved.

b) The Department or its provider agency shall provide, no later than 14 days in advance of the hearing, a copy of the most recent service plan and Visitation and Contact Plan, prepared within the prior six months, to the court and all parties to the permanency hearings.

c) If not contained in the plan, the Department or its provider agency shall also include a report setting forth:

1) any special physical, psychological, educational, medical, emotional, or other needs of the minor or his or her family that are relevant to a permanency or placement determination; and

2) for any minor age 16 or over, a written description of the programs or services that will enable the minor to prepare for independent living.

d) The Department's or its provider agency's written report must explain why, if the goal is other than return home, continued involvement is appropriate and why termination of parental rights or private guardianship is not being sought.

e) The Department's or its provider agency's written report must explain why, if the goal recommended is continuing foster care, all other goals have been ruled out based on the child's best interest and delineate the compelling reasons for selection of this goal.

f) The Department's or its provider agency's caseworker is required to appear and testify at the hearing and prepare a written report for the court.

(Source: Amended at 40 Ill. Reg. 767, effective December 31, 2015)