

What is the New Jersey State Child Placement Advisory Council?

The New Jersey State Child Placement Advisory Council (NJ CPAC) was established by a law called the Child Placement Review Act. NJ CPAC is supported by staff in the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC). The executive board of NJ CPAC consists of members elected by county Child Placement Review Board members. Through its standing committees, the executive board assists in the continuing education and training of Child Placement Review Board members; reviews current legislation; maintains ongoing relationships with organizations and groups who have a mutual interest in child welfare; publishes newsletters and reports; maintains a website; and arranges workshops and speakers.

NJ CPAC has specific legal mandates that include: advising the New Jersey Supreme Court on the rules governing the duties and practices of review boards; reviewing Division of Child Protection and Permanency policies, practices and procedures on the placement of children outside their homes; monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the Child Placement Review Act; advising the Supreme Court on the establishment of guidelines and procedures for the training of Child Placement Review Board members; and providing an annual report to the Supreme Court, governor, and the legislature on the effectiveness of the implementation of the act.

County Child Placement Review Offices



www.njcpac.org/resources/volunteer.html

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New Jersey Judiciary

A Guide to New Jersey Child Placement Review (CPR)



What is a Child Placement Review Board?

Child Placement Review Boards were created by a New Jersey law called the Child Placement Review Act. The family court in each county establishes review boards, which consist of court-appointed, trained citizen volunteers who are charged with reviewing the cases of children placed outside of their homes by the New Jersey Division of Child Protection and Permanency (DCP&P). The review boards consider whether a placement serves the best interest of the child.

How Does a Review Board Operate?

The review board is responsible for preparing a report that specifies any issues, concerns or recommendations that could arise regarding the placement of a child. Information for this report is gathered from written reports from caseworkers, resource families, parents, counselors, doctors, and educators. The review board also might have the opportunity to interview caseworkers other individuals, or the child, when appropriate. Through group process and consensus, review board members arrive at a recommendation concerning the child's best interest with a particular focus on safety, timeliness to permanency, and well-being. The recommendation is submitted to the family court judge.

Who Can Serve on a Review Board?

Review board members must be residents of the county in which they serve and should represent the ethnic, racial and economic populations

of that county. Members are appointed for a provisional term of one year and could be reappointed for additional terms of three years.

All volunteers must complete an initial child placement review training. Each year, board members are required to participate in five hours of continuing education offered by the New Jersey Child Placement Advisory Council (NJ CPAC), the county family court, or approved provider. Continuing education helps ensure that board members have a current and operational knowledge of the complex and changing nature of the problems facing children in out-of-home placement.

How Do Citizens Join a Review Board?

Recruitment of Child Placement Review Board members is an ongoing process. Each county is required to have at least one board for every 200 reviews held in the prior calendar year. Prospective board members are subject to a screening process, which at a minimum includes a written application, an interview and a criminal background check. To learn more, scan the QR code on the back of this brochure.

What Do Review Boards Consider to Determine the Best Interests of the Child?

Review board members question social workers and interested parties to determine the best interests of children removed from their homes. The goal for review boards is to understand the case plan, circumstances of the child's removal,

and services provided to the child, parents, or legal guardian. The answers to these questions determine the board's recommendation(s) to the family court judge.

Review Boards Can Make Several Recommendations.

These recommendations could include amendments to the case or placement plan, suggestions for additional services for the child or family or recommendations for mediation or a summary hearing. In addition to the family court judge, a copy of the review board recommendation is sent to those who received notices of the review: parents or legal guardians; attorneys for parents, children and DCP&P; resource families; the child, when appropriate; staff of the residential facility, if applicable; and DCP&P.

How and When are Resource Families/Biological Families Notified of a Review by the Child Placement Review Board?

When the child is entering the foster care system for the first time, the county CPR coordinator schedules the initial reviews to be held 60 days after placement. For voluntary placements, the review board conducts a permanency hearing no later than one year after placement. All interested parties are notified and encouraged to attend all review board reviews.