

Frequently Asked Questions

What is NJ CPAC?

The New Jersey Child Placement Advisory Council (NJ CPAC or CPAC) is a statewide, legally-mandated council comprised of active Child Placement Review (CPR) board volunteers. The mission of CPAC is to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the Child Placement Review Act of 1978 in promoting the welfare of children in out-of-home placement and to advise New Jersey's three branches of government of the CPR Act's continued effectiveness. CPAC operates under the auspices of the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC).

What other functions does CPAC perform?

In addition to preparing an annual report, the CPAC Chair and Vice Chair meets with the New Jersey chief justice and the acting director of the Administrative Office of the Courts to present its findings and recommendations.

CPAC sponsors two to three trainings a year. The trainings provide CPR board volunteers, court staff and state child advocacy groups with information on various topics that impact their work with children in out-of-home placement. In recent years CPAC has expanded its training offerings to educators, health care workers and other professionals who come into direct contact with children in placement and/or with struggling families. CPAC offers these trainings as a courtesy service to the child welfare community.

CPAC also becomes involved in advocacy efforts on important issues affecting vulnerable children and families. Members of the CPAC Executive Board lead or sit on various state and local committees and task forces.

What is meant by "out-of-home placement?"

Out-of-home placement occurs when a child is removed from the home of the biological parents or legal guardian by the Division of Child Protection and Permanency (DCP&P) and placed in a temporary living arrangement, such as a resource home, formerly known as a foster home, or with a relative.

What happens when a child enters placement?

Federal law requires that all children entering placement be assigned a "permanency goal"— a clearly defined plan for the child to leave placement for a safe, healthy home. The goal for most children entering the system is to return home as soon as it is safe for them to do so. If reunification is not in the best interests of the child, an alternative placement is sought, such as adoption.

What is CPR?

The Child Placement Review (CPR) program involves court-appointed citizen volunteers who are trained members of CPR boards responsible for reviewing the cases of all children in out-of-home placement and making recommendations to the judge. There is at least one CPR board in each county.

What is the 60 Day Review?

The Initial CPR Review, sometimes referred to as the "60 Day Review," is a comprehensive and structured session conducted by a CPR board 60 days after a child is placed out of the home. The board reviews information received by the DCP&P regarding the placement and identifies barriers that could prevent the DCP&P from attaining a safe, healthy permanent home for the child. Through group process and consensus, CPR members arrive at combined recommendations which are forwarded to the judge. Before making any recommendations, a CPR board always considers what is in the best interests of a child, with a focus on the child's health, safety and permanency. Safety is always paramount.

Aren't there caseworkers and attorneys who do this kind of work?

In addition to the judge, the caseworker and court staff, other individuals representing different interests may be involved in a child's case. They may include the child's parents and family members, resource parents and attorneys representing the DCP&P, parents or the child.

How do I become a CPR board volunteer?

The Judiciary website has information on applying for a volunteer position in your county, including vacancies in the CPR program, contact information, eligibility requirements and a volunteer application. Refer to <https://njcourts.gov/public/volunteer/volunteer.html>.

How do I join CPAC?

You must be a CPR board volunteer in good standing for at least 12 months. The Board votes to accept new members during the June election meeting. However, the Board will consider adding qualified new members throughout the year. Contact the CPAC Coordinator for more information.

All CPB board volunteers considering working at the state level are invited to attend meetings of the CPAC Executive Board by providing advance notice to the CPAC Coordinator. Members of the CPAC Executive Board are also available at all trainings to answer questions.

