

Your child is in out-of-
home care...



What you need to know
about

**The Adoption and Safe
Families
Act of 1997
(ASFA)**

and how it affects you
and your child.

If your child has been placed in out-of-home care by Children and Youth Services, you should be working with caseworkers from the Agency. If not already, you will probably be asked to make changes in the way you care for your children. This may mean making big changes in your own life.

ASFA says that **children must be safe and have a permanent place to live**. It says that parents have a limited amount of time to make the changes that are needed.

If your child is placed in out-of-home care, there will be **hearings** held in Juvenile Court at least every 6 months to determine if your child should remain away from home, or if your child may return home. This depends on you making the necessary changes in your life.

At 12 months (1 year), the agency will make a recommendation to the Court as to whether your child should be:

- Returned home (and when)
- Placed for adoption
- Placed with a permanent legal custodian
- Placed with a fit and willing relative
- Placed in another planned living arrangement intended to be permanent

If you have not made the necessary changes and your child has been in placement for 15 out of the past 22 months, he/she could be placed for adoption.

The law says that at 15 months, the Agency must ask the Court to take away your parental rights or give a very good reason not to.



WHAT SHOULD YOU BE DOING WHILE YOUR CHILD IS IN PLACEMENT?

You must work with your caseworker to solve the problems that caused your child to be placed. These problems could include, but are not limited to:

- Substance abuse
- Mental health issues
- Inappropriate discipline
- Not taking care of your child's needs for food, medical care, or supervision
- Abuse or neglect of your child

- **The important thing to remember is that you do not have much time to solve these problems.**

The Agency will work with you and offer services and recommendations to help you help yourself to resolve your problems, but you must do the work.

ASFA says that you must show that you have solved, or nearly solved, these problems within 1 year of your child's placement. If you do not do this, your child may be placed for adoption.

IN SOME CASES, THE AGENCY NEED NOT TRY TO RETURN YOUR CHILD

According to ASFA, there are some reasons the Agency may not even have to try to return your child to you. These reasons include:

- Your child was abandoned
- You have failed to stay involved with your child for 6 months
- You have had your parental rights to another child taken away
- You have caused serious bodily injury to or sexually assaulted any of your children
- You have been convicted of certain crimes where the victim was a child

IMPORTANT!

ASFA sets strict time limits and deadlines for both you and the Agency. You need to be aware of what could happen if you:

- Miss appointments with your child's caseworker
- Miss visits with your child
- Miss scheduled hearings in Juvenile Court
- Don't make progress toward the changes you are asked to make

In these situations, your parental rights could be terminated without your agreement and your child could be placed for adoption.



Your caseworker is available to help you.

Talk with your caseworker for more information.

*Snyder County
Children & Youth Services*

Suite 15
713 Bridge Street
Selinsgrove, PA 17870

Office hours:
8:00am – 4:00pm
Monday through Friday

Telephone:
(570) 374-4570

Fax:
(570) 374-4351

24-hour emergency contacts:
(570) 372-0826
or 911

