

PATHWAYS TO PERMANENCY: Collaborating on the APPLA Provisions of P.L. 113–183

The Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997 created the term “another planned permanent living arrangement” (APPLA) but limited its use to when child welfare agencies and courts had ruled out other permanency options. The Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act (Public Law (P.L.) 113–183) further limits the use of APPLA as a permanency plan and mandates additional requirements for case planning and court reviews. The real charge to child welfare agencies and courts is to redouble efforts to achieve permanency for all youth in child welfare.

Limit the use of APPLA, but when it is the selected option...



the child welfare agency must document / the court must find:

APPLA Is Not Used for Youth Under Age 16

Conduct targeted case file reviews.
Form interdisciplinary teams for challenging cases.
Develop and closely monitor action plans.

Compelling Reasons for the Permanency Option

Identify case-specific and convincing reasons for the permanency plan.
Specify why preferred permanency options are not in the youth’s best interest.
Do not accept generalizations (“The youth is too old to be adopted.”).

APPLA Is the Best Plan

Remember, APPLA will rarely be the best plan.
Present specific explanations for why APPLA is appropriate for this youth.

Consultation With Youth About the Plan

Talk with the youth and make sure the youth understands the available options.
Build youth awareness that adoption and guardianship can include ongoing relationships with parents and siblings.
Train child welfare and court staff on how to engage youth in permanency planning.
Involve youth in the permanency work/services.

Intensive, Ongoing, and To-Date Unsuccessful Efforts

Make sure the full array of permanency services has been provided, and provided several times.
Identify specific barriers to permanency (e.g., lack of access to mental health services).
Identify a strategy to address each barrier.

APPLA Provides Stable, Supportive, and Enduring Connections and Services That Meet Youth’s Needs

Describe the specific APPLA.
Be aware, if the plan is not acceptable, the court can order additional planning and services.
Continue efforts to provide permanency and achieve a family-based permanency goal.

Use of the Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard

Provide training for caregivers on the importance of “normalcy” and reasonable and prudent parenting.
Offer youth opportunities to participate in age-appropriate activities.

Regular and Ongoing Opportunities to Participate in Age-Appropriate or Developmentally Appropriate Activities

Talk with the youth about the youth’s interests and opportunities for activities.
Pay special attention to the needs and barriers of youth who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or questioning; parenting; or have disabilities.
Identify any barriers to access activities of interest and address them through planning or court order.

Reasonable Efforts to Finalize the Permanency Plan

Continue reasonable efforts to finalize the preferred permanency plans, even if the goal is APPLA.
Leverage all resources that may move the case to true permanency.