

What should you think about?

The federal law sets strict time limits and deadlines that you and the agency must both meet. You need to think about the consequences of

- Missing meetings with your child's case worker
- Missing visits with your child
- Missing scheduled court hearings
- Delaying solving the problems that led to your child's living away from home

The consequences may be that your parental rights will be terminated without your agreement, and your child will be placed for adoption.

What should you do?

- Work with your case worker to solve family problems quickly
- Talk to your caseworker if you have any questions

Your case worker can be reached by contacting:

Juneau County
Department of Human Services
200 Hickory Street
Mauston, WI 53948

608-847-2400

Mission Statement

Providing quality services for individuals and families in a safe, supportive, respectful partnership by promoting health, well-being, and self-sufficiency.

Vision Statement

To promote safety, well-being, and self-sufficiency for the individuals of Juneau County. We strive to do so by remaining open-minded to the ideas and suggestions of others; provide person-centered services in the least intrusive and least restrictive way possible; collaborate with our departments and community partners; to function with integrity in all matters, manage public resources responsibly; and acknowledge the values and beliefs of others in a courteous and respectful manner.

Juneau County Department of Human Services

200 Hickory Street
Mauston, WI 53948

Ph: 608-847-2400
Fax: 608-847-9421

Office Hours

Monday through Friday
8:00am - 4:30pm

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Juneau County Department of Human Services

The Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA)

What Parents Need To Know

Adoption and Safe Families Act

The **Adoption and Safe Families Act** of 1997 applies to you if you have a child in placement, even if you asked for your child to be placed in a home away from you. The federal law sets strict time limits and deadlines that you and the agency both must meet.

You probably know that while your child is living away from your home, you should be working with your case worker. You know that you need to make changes in the way you care for your child. This may mean making big changes in your own life.

Under this law, a parent is required to take responsibility for making the changes that are necessary for keeping their children safe. Parents are required to make these changes in a limited amount of time, usually 12 to 15 months.

Permanency means that your child must be able to expect a decision about where they will live and whom they will live with long term. The law allows only 15 months, a little over a year, before the court makes that decision.

When a child is placed away from their parents, there will be reviews of the plan for permanency every six months. They are called **Permanency Reviews**.

These reviews may be to the court or to a panel. The goals for your child's permanency is discussed at these reviews. Those possible outcomes are:

- When and if a child will be returned home,
- Adoption,
- Legal Guardianship with another person, or
- In another permanent living arrangement

Whether your child will return home depends on whether you have made the necessary changes in your life and how you plan to take care of your children.

The law effects you and your child the minute your child is removed from your custody.

Once your child has been placed outside of your home, you have a limited time to show that you have solved, or nearly solved the problem that led to your child's placement.

If you are not able to show that you have solved or nearly solved the problems and your child remains out of your home for 15 out of 22 months, your parental rights could be ended and your child may be placed for adoption.

What should you work on?

You must work with your case worker to solve the problems that led to your child's placement. Your case worker will offer services and recommendations to help you keep your child safe.

The important thing is to remember that you do not have much time to solve these problems. The agency will work with you and will provide services to help you.

You may not be able to have your child returned to you.

The law says that there are some reasons that your child may not be returned to you regardless of what you do. These reasons are called aggravated circumstances and include:

- An infant is abandoned
- You have involuntarily lost parental rights to another child
- You have been convicted of certain crimes where the victim was a child
- Your actions have resulted in a serious bodily injury to any of your children
- If you do not stay involved with your child for 3 months