



**Legal
Permanency**

INDIANA
DEPARTMENT OF
CHILD
SERVICES

Legal Permanency

- Mission: The Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) protects children from abuse and neglect. DCS does this by partnering with families and communities to provide safe, nurturing, and stable homes
- Vision: Children Thrive in safe, caring, supportive communities and families
- Values: We believe every child has the right to appropriate care and a permanent home. We believe parents have the primary responsibility for the care and safety of their children. We believe the most desirable place for children to grow up is with their own families, when these families are able to provide safe, nurturing and stable homes.

Why?

- Research tells us kids do better when they can remain in their own home safely or have connections with relatives
 - October 7, 2008, Fostering Connections signed into law. Purpose, maintain family connections
 - TN – from 2000 to 2009 increased children in their home by 4000, incidences of repeat maltreatment decreased (David Bornstein, 2011)

Why?

- Children entering care at a young age experience the following issues:
 - Prenatal & perinatal health – premature, low birth weights (Committee on Early Childhood, Adoption, and Dependent Care, 2000)
 - Physical health – 90% have serious, chronic conditions (Dicker, Gordon, & Knitzer, 2001)
 - Attachment – elevated rates of attachment disorders (Morton & Browne, 1998)
 - Developmental delays – 4 to 5 times the general population (Dicker, Gordon, & Knitzer, 2001)
 - Education – substantially lower grades (Emerson & Lovitt, 2003)

Legal Permanency

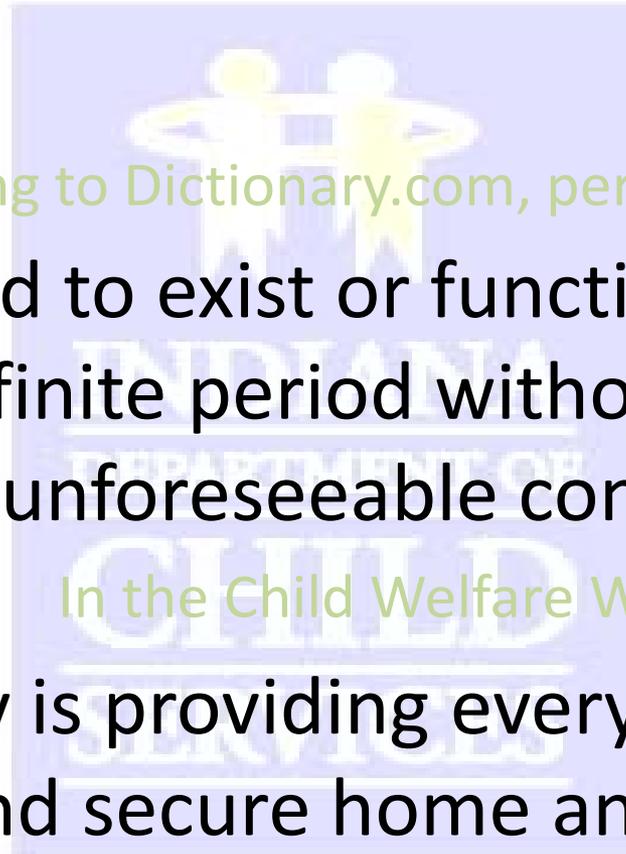
What is it?

According to Dictionary.com, permanent means:

Intended to exist or function for a long, indefinite period without regard to unforeseeable conditions

In the Child Welfare World:

Permanency is providing every child with a safe, stable, and secure home and family, forever.



Legal Permanency

What is it?

- Measuring “permanency outcomes” is in one sense straightforward, but it is also complicated when you begin to differentiate emotional permanence versus legal permanence – and other nuances.
- Strictly speaking, we generally think of it and measure legal permanency as these:
 - child reunified,
 - child adopted (and we try to track if this is a relative or stepparent vs. non-relative adoption)
 - child placed as part of a legal guardianship
 - Author: Peter Precora, PhD; Professor, University of Washington

Legal Permanency

- Reunification
- Adoption
- Legal Guardianship
- Placement with a Fit & Willing Relative
- A Planned Permanent Living Arrangement



Legal Permanency

- Reunification of the child with his or her family is the preferred permanency option whenever that can be safely achieved.
- When reunification is not appropriate, adoption is viewed as providing the greatest degree of permanence
- Taken from ACF website

Adoption

- When a Youth says No to Adoption
 - I am ready for independence, I don't need more adults telling me what to do!
 - I don't want to get dragged down by my crazy family and their issues.
 - Adoption is for babies – I am not a baby!
 - I am happy where I am – I don't want to move
 - I don't want to lose important connections to my siblings, grandparents, birth parents, former foster parents
 - I need to protect myself from being hurt
 - I don't want to change my name
 - I'm scared
 - No one will want me

Adoption

- When we give the Youth the “Power of the NO” – we say
 - You are not lovable
 - No one would want you anyway
 - There is no hope for your future
 - You are not important enough for me to exert myself trying to find you a family

Permanency & Practice Support

- Adoption Training
 - How to get past the No
- Guardianship Programs
 - GAP
 - HSC Assistance for Field
- Youth Connections Program/Investigators
 - How they help find connections

