

Child Welfare Services Required by Federal Law

Social Security Act, Sec. 431. [42 U.S.C. 629a] (a) In General.—As used in this subpart:

(1) **Family preservation services.**—The term “family preservation services” means services for children and families designed to help families (including adoptive and extended families) at risk or in crisis, including—

(A) service programs designed to help children—

(i) where safe and appropriate, return to families from which they have been removed; or

(ii) be placed for adoption, with a legal guardian, or, if adoption or legal guardianship is determined not to be safe and appropriate for a child, in some other planned, permanent living arrangement;

(B) preplacement preventive services programs, such as intensive family preservation programs, designed to help children at risk of foster care placement remain safely with their families;

(C) service programs designed to provide followup care to families to whom a child has been returned after a foster care placement;

(D) respite care of children to provide temporary relief for parents and other caregivers (including foster parents);

(E) services designed to improve parenting skills (by reinforcing parents' confidence in their strengths, and helping them to identify where improvement is needed and to obtain assistance in improving those skills) with respect to matters such as child development, family budgeting, coping with stress, health, and nutrition; and

(F) infant safe haven programs to provide a way for a parent to safely relinquish a newborn infant at a safe haven designated pursuant to a State law.

(2) **Family support services.**—The term “family support services” means community-based services to promote the safety and well-being of children and families designed to increase the strength and stability of families (including adoptive, foster, and extended families), to increase parents' confidence and competence in their parenting abilities, to afford children a safe, stable, and supportive family environment, to strengthen parental relationships and promote healthy marriages, and otherwise to enhance child development.

(3) **State agency.**—The term “State agency” means the State agency responsible for administering the program under subpart 1.

(4) State.—The term “State” includes an Indian tribe or tribal organization, in addition to the meaning given such term for purposes of subpart 1.

(5) Tribal organization.—The term “tribal organization” means the recognized governing body of any Indian tribe.

(6) Indian tribe.—The term “Indian tribe” means any Indian tribe (as defined in section 482(i)(5), as in effect before August 22, 1996) and any Alaska Native organization (as defined in section 482(i)(7)(A), as so in effect).

(7) Time-limited family reunification services.—

(A) In general.—The term “time-limited family reunification services” means the services and activities described in subparagraph (B) that are provided to a child that is removed from the child's home and placed in a foster family home or a child care institution and to the parents or primary caregiver of such a child, in order to facilitate the reunification of the child safely and appropriately within a timely fashion, but only during the 15-month period that begins on the date that the child, pursuant to section [475\(5\)\(F\)](#), is considered to have entered foster care.

(B) Services and activities described.—The services and activities described in this subparagraph are the following:

(i) Individual, group, and family counseling.

(ii) Inpatient, residential, or outpatient substance abuse treatment services.

(iii) Mental health services.

(iv) Assistance to address domestic violence.

(v) Services designed to provide temporary child care and therapeutic services for families, including crisis nurseries.

(vi) Transportation to or from any of the services and activities described in this subparagraph.

(8) Adoption promotion and support services.—The term “adoption promotion and support services” means services and activities designed to encourage more adoptions out of the foster care system, when adoptions promote the best interests of children, including such activities as pre- and post-adoptive services and activities designed to expedite the adoption process and support adoptive families.