

## **Adoption and Safe Families Act - Reasonable Efforts**

The Family Preservation and Support Services Act required states to make "reasonable efforts" to reunify families and prevent the permanent removal of a child from his or her home. The Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) attempts to clarify the "reasonable efforts" requirement.

Under the ASFA, a state is not required to make reasonable efforts to reunify a family or prevent the permanent removal of a child from his or her home when a court has determined that the child's parent has:

1. committed murder or voluntary manslaughter of another child of the parent;
2. aided, abetted, attempted, conspired, or solicited to commit such murder or manslaughter;
3. committed a felony assault resulting in serious bodily injury to the child or another child of the parent;
4. had his or her parental rights involuntarily terminated with respect to a sibling of the child; or
5. subjected the child to "aggravated circumstances," including but not limited to abandonment, torture, chronic abuse, or sexual abuse.

If the state does not make reasonable efforts to preserve or reunify the child's family, the ASFA requires the state to make reasonable efforts to place the child in a permanent home in a timely manner. The ASFA permits states to engage in "concurrent permanency planning." In other words, states may attempt to preserve or reunify the child's family and at the same time attempt to find adoptive parents or some other type of permanent home for the child.