

Permanent Guardianship:

Permanent guardianship is a judicially-created, permanent relationship between the child and a relative or non-relative caregiver and is possible whether or not termination of parental rights has occurred;

It is appropriate when adoption has been explored and is not in the best interests of the child (ex. parent-child relationship is strong; Medicaid is needed; parent's SSI benefits are needed);

Permanent guardianship may be more appropriate than adoption, as it does not sever the birth parents' rights and allows for a continuing bond and connections between the child and family to include ongoing contact and visitation;

Permanent guardianships remain in effect until the child turns 18 years old with limited circumstances to modify or vacate;

A non-reunification finding must be made by the court prior to granting a permanent guardianship; and

The child must be placed with the caregiver for a period of 6 months prior to DFCS recommending a permanent guardianship. Upon meeting certain eligibility requirements, permanent guardianship subsidies can be accessed by relatives and nonrelatives at various rates.

Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement:

Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (APPLA) occurs when DFCS maintains care and custody of a youth and arranges a living situation in which the youth is expected to remain until adulthood;

APPLA is permissible for youth over 16 years of age, yet only appropriate when other options have been ruled out, and compelling reasons exist for why it is not in a child's best interests to achieve permanency through another option;

APPLA is appropriate in situations in which a youth is in safe, stable placement with an adult who is committed to him until he reaches the age of majority or has medical needs requiring state-funded support; and

When APPLA must be the permanency plan, CASA should continue to advocate for a youth's well-being, helping to ensure that a youth can participate in activities, engage in as much normalcy as possible, successfully prepare for adulthood, and maintain relationships with a supportive adult. Other legal permanency options can also continue to be revisited.