

FIVE FEDERAL LAWS AND THE NATIONAL COMPACT

Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act

The Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act of 1980, Pub.L. 96-272, June 17, 1980, 94 Stat. 500, sets forth the first legal establishment of time frames for children placed in foster care settings.

Key provisions of the Act:

- Identifies the courts as the critical link that have the power to enforce an 18-month permanency time frame for foster children.
- Requires social services agencies to demonstrate that all avenues of intervention and rehabilitation are implemented or ruled out prior to removal of a child from his/her family.

Creates a checks and balance system by linking the availability of federal funds used to care for children removed from their families with performance measures and accountability for each state social services agency.