

Why Add Subsidized Permanent Guardianship As An Option in Tennessee?

- October 14, 2005 Tennessee became 10th state to be granted a waiver approval from the Department of Health and Human Services to use Title IV-E funds to provide Subsidized Permanent Guardianship.
- Approximately 56% of children are reunified with their parents and about 10% have finalized adoptions.
- Children placed with relatives often stay in custody longer than those placed with unrelated foster care providers.
- Financial barriers often prevent relatives and kin from assuming full care and legal responsibility.
- Adoption by relatives may not be appropriate because it places strain on familial roles and cultural norms; i.e. grandma becomes mom.
- Re-entry rates for children exiting custody to live with relatives is likely due to lack of post-permanency services and lack of financial support.
- Tennessee believes in preserving family relationships and connections for children.

Tennessee Proposed Goals for Subsidized Permanent Guardianship Waiver

- Increase number of children exiting custody to permanent placement arrangements with relatives or kin
- Decrease length of time children placed with relatives and kin remain in out-of-home placement
- Protect children from subsequent abuse or neglect
- Reduce rates of re-entry for children who exit custody to relative or kin placements
- Use family focused permanency-planning approach that effectively supports families through all phases of the custodial process
- Address the overrepresentation of minority children in out-of-home placements and respond to the unique needs and cultures of minority children and families

How can each individual support and promote Subsidized Permanent Guardianship?

- Keep an open mind about relatives needing financial help (Could you take in your nieces, nephews or grandkids today without some financial assistance?)
- Utilize diligent efforts to locate and assess the abilities of relatives to care for children
- Be able to discuss the Relative Caregivers Options with family members
- Have a sense of urgency for our children to move to a permanent placement
- Think about some of the common attitudes or misconceptions about family/kinship that must be eliminated in order to make this successful.