

NEW JERSEY LAW

New Jersey Statutes - Title 30 Institutions And Agencies - 30:4C-15.1 Termination of parental rights, standards.

7. a. The division shall initiate a petition to terminate parental rights on the grounds of the "best interests of the child" pursuant to subsection (c) of section 15 of P.L.1951, c.138 (C.30:4C-15) if the following standards are met:

(1) The child's safety, health or development has been or will continue to be endangered by the parental relationship;

(2) The parent is unwilling or unable to eliminate the harm facing the child or is unable or unwilling to provide a safe and stable home for the child and the delay of permanent placement will add to the harm. Such harm may include evidence that separating the child from his resource family parents would cause serious and enduring emotional or psychological harm to the child;

(3) The division has made reasonable efforts to provide services to help the parent correct the circumstances which led to the child's placement outside the home and the court has considered alternatives to termination of parental rights; and

(4) Termination of parental rights will not do more harm than good.

b. The division shall initiate a petition to terminate parental rights on the ground that the "parent has abandoned the child" pursuant to subsection (e) of section 15 of P.L.1951, c.138 (C.30:4C-15) if the following standards are met:

(1) a court finds that for a period of six or more months:

(a) the parent, although able to have contact, has had no contact with the child, the child's resource family parent or the division; and

(b) the parent's whereabouts are unknown, notwithstanding the division's reasonable efforts to locate the parent; or

(2) where the identities of the parents are unknown and the division has exhausted all reasonable methods of attempting identification, the division may immediately file for termination of parental rights upon the completion of the law enforcement investigation; or

(3) where the parent voluntarily delivered the child to and left the child at, or voluntarily arranged for another person to deliver the child to and leave the child at a State, county or municipal police station or at an emergency department of a licensed general hospital in this State when the child is or appears to be no more than 30 days old, without expressing an intent to return for the child, as provided in section 4 of P.L.2000, c.58 (C.30:4C-15.7), the division shall file for termination of parental rights no later than 21 days after the day the division assumed care, custody and control of the child.

c. As used in this section and in section 15 of P.L.1951, c.138 (C.30:4C-15) "reasonable efforts" mean attempts by an agency authorized by the division to assist the parents in remedying the circumstances and conditions that led to the placement of the child and in reinforcing the family structure, including, but not limited to:

- (1) consultation and cooperation with the parent in developing a plan for appropriate services;
 - (2) providing services that have been agreed upon, to the family, in order to further the goal of family reunification;
 - (3) informing the parent at appropriate intervals of the child's progress, development and health;
- and
- (4) facilitating appropriate visitation.

d. The division shall not be required to provide "reasonable efforts" as defined in subsection c. of this section prior to filing a petition for the termination of parental rights if an exception to the requirement to provide reasonable efforts to reunify the family has been established pursuant to section 25 of P.L.1999, c.53 (C.30:4C-11.3).

New Jersey Statutes - Title 30 Institutions And Agencies - 30:4C-15.8 Responsibilities of division, placement of child

5. The division, after assuming the care, custody and control of a child from a licensed general hospital pursuant to section 4 of P.L.2000, c.58 (C.30:4C-15.7), shall not be required to attempt to reunify the child with the child's parents. Additionally, the division shall not be required to search for relatives of the child as a placement or permanency option, or to implement other placement requirements that give preference to relatives if the division does not have information as to the identity of the child, the child's mother or the child's father. The division shall place the child with potential adoptive parents as soon as possible.