

aask | ADVOCACY



Jacob's Law advocacy email

Thanks to the efforts of Anika Robinson, Angela Teachout, and Susan Woodruff the [Passage of Jacob's Law](#) earlier this year gives Arizona families improved access to behavioral health services for children in foster care.

There are three numbers you need to know:

- **72.** A rapid response team must conduct an initial in-home evaluation of children placed in your home by the Arizona Department of Child Safety within the first 72 hours. The team members assess the immediate needs of the child and screen for developmental delays. The team will also connect the family with
- **7.** The service provider must complete the initial behavioral health evaluation within seven days.
- **21.** Services recommended from that evaluation must start within 21 days. When the needs are urgent, the time line is accelerated. The rapid response team has to be there in two hours, not 72. The initial behavioral health evaluation has to be in two days, not seven.

Behavioral health service providers now also offer a dedicated foster care hotline. In Maricopa County and parts of Pinal County, the provider is [Mercy Maricopa Integrated Care](#). The hotline number is 602-633- 0763.

In other portions of Pinal County, the provider is [Cenpatico Integrated Care](#). The hotline number is 520-809- 6432. If you are still experiencing delays getting behavioral health services, call the AHCCCS Customer Service line at 602-364- 4558 or 1-800- 867-5808.

AASK family specialists will help you advocate for additional service anytime.

If recommended services are not provided within 21 days, you can use any provider registered with AHCCS.

[Click here for more information, including contact information for behavioral health providers across Arizona, is found on this flyer.](#)

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It is increasingly difficult to be a foster parent. At the same time expectations for families are increasing, the respect for and appreciation of families seems to be waning. It sometimes feels that the system is not designed to support families but to test their patience and commitment. Families are being asked to do things without being told "why" or "how." Families are often being told inconsistent and contradictory information that feels arbitrary or even incorrect. Foster parents are left feeling powerless. They don't know what to expect. They don't know how to respond.

In order to better support you in providing meaningful relationships for the children in your care, Aid to Adoption of Special Kids (AASK) begins an effort to give our foster parents power by giving them information. We hope to educate foster parents through "AASK Advocacy" a series of articles on state policies and laws governing the child welfare system and the role of foster families. Our goal is to arm you with a clear explanation of how things are supposed to work and the underlying policy, rule or law that is the legal basis for the explanation.

Education builds confidence. Confidence creates control. Together, education, confidence and control help you make better decisions for you, your family and for the child you've brought into your home.