

# Strengthening Families Act Committee

A STATUTORY COMMITTEE §43-4716





# Background

---

Statutory Committee created in 2017 (NRS §43-4716)

- Began in 2015 as the Normalcy Task Force and later became the Strengthening Families Committee
- Monitor and make recommendations regarding the implementation in Nebraska of the federal Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act, Public Law 113-183, as such existed in January 1, 2017, and the Nebraska Strengthening Families Act.
- Co-Chairs: Vernon Davis, & Sarah Helvey, Nebraska Appleseed



# Priority Areas

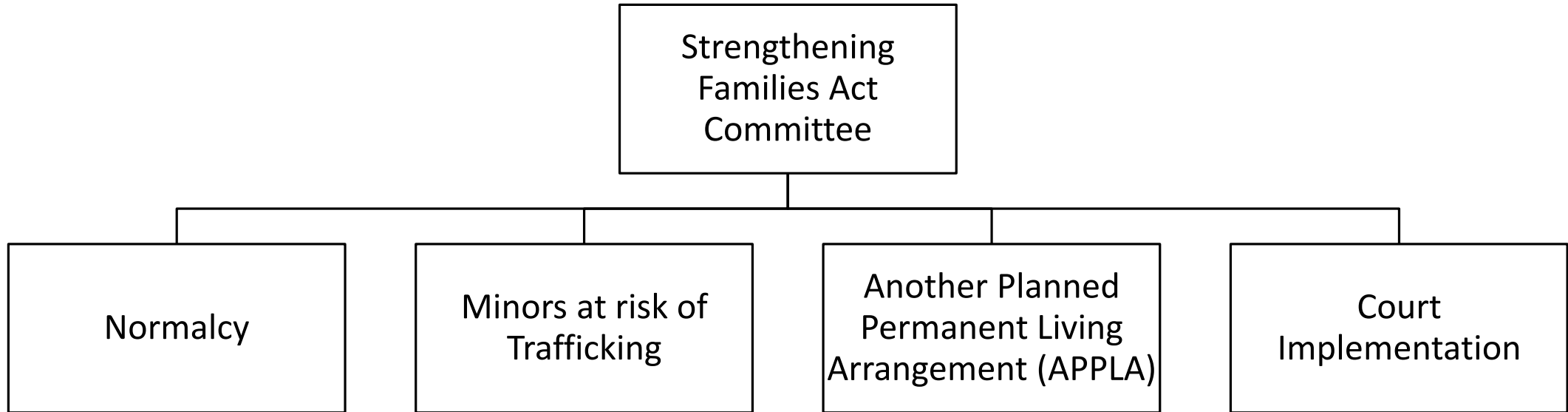
---

1. Monitor the implementation of the State and Federal Strengthening Families Act
2. Promote normalcy as the foundation to: prevent trafficking; address disparate impacts on minorities; and support the successful transition to adulthood
3. Coordinate implementation with other policy making bodies



# Workgroups in 2019

---





# Activity this year

---

## **Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (APPLA) Subcommittee**

- Created Tip Sheets for Children & Family Service (CFS) Specialists at DHHS and SFA Advisors
- Worked with the Nebraska Chapter of Foster Care Alumni to produce a video to educate and promote the SFA Advisor

## **Normalcy Subcommittee**

- Reviewed Normalcy Plans and Reports submitted by Child-Caring Institutions and created a response letter to those plans and reports reviewed
- Issued a Look-Back Survey to measure progress since the enactment of the NSFA in 2016



# Activity this year (continued)

---

## **Court Implementation Subcommittee**

- Revised two court forms to integrate normalcy and provisions of the NSFA as part of review hearing exhibits
  - Youth Court Information Form (older youth)
  - Caregiver Information Form



# Annual Report Recommendations

---

Approved by the Commission in 2019

1. Normalcy should extend to youth in care in all systems, **(as appropriate and considering parental preference)** including child welfare, juvenile justice, behavioral and mental health, and developmental disabilities. The Committee recommends the statutory requirement for Normalcy Plans and Reports pursuant to §43-4706 be amended to include facilities which provide treatment services as a component of the placement, including treatment group homes and psychiatric residential treatment facilities.



# Recommendations (continued)

---

2. Stakeholders should make every effort to make decisions that enhance and maximize normalcy and avoid placements and circumstances that are inherently not normal.
3. Children, youth and foster caregivers should be given the opportunity to be present at every court hearing. When this is not possible, court information forms should be available in every jurisdiction and provided to youth and their foster caregivers.
4. The court forms must have a party responsible for ensuring youth and foster caregivers receive forms and have a user-friendly way to return those forms to the Court prior to the hearing.





# Coming up next year

---

- Access to Driver's licenses and insurance for teens in out of home placement!
- Life skills assessment for preparing teens for Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (formerly termed Independent Living)
- Evaluating data surrounding youth who are missing from care and at risk of trafficking, minor trafficking prevention, services and response.