

Edward: A Permanency Roundtable Success Story

In 2012, local law enforcement discovered Edward*, then 11, alone on a city bus. He was unable to speak and could not communicate where he lived or who his parents were. Upon making contact with relatives, authorities discovered that Edward was developmentally delayed and had very limited speech. Edward was living in the U.S. with his father and younger brother, while his mother remained in their home country with his two other siblings.

This was not the first incident of Edward being unsupervised and wandering. Because his father could not provide a safe home, Edward was placed in foster care. His medical and mental health evaluations revealed autism, developmental delays and a speech disorder. His father was offered therapeutic services for Edward, which Edward received in his foster home and at school. His father completed the services, but did not have an acceptable living arrangement for Edward. His visits were inconsistent and he was not readily available to provide parental consent to continue Edward's treatments.



Edward's Permanency Action Plan included outreach to relatives to determine if any were interested in being part of Edward's life. The plan also included an action item to determine Edward's legal residency status in the U.S. Over the next three months of ongoing Roundtables, Edward's legal residency was applied for and approved; he is now awaiting delivery of his green card. The PRT team also identified a paternal cousin, Ms. Jones*, who had known Edward as a child and expressed interest in being his permanent legal guardian. Edward's father was relieved that Ms. Jones was willing to care for his son while he retained his paternal rights and his relationship with Edward. Ms. Jones made it clear to Edward's father that he had to visit Edward consistently, and she offered to provide weekly transportation so he could visit Edward in his foster home. The PRT team discussed with Ms. Jones the challenges and requirements of serving as Edward's long-term legal guardian. She appears enthusiastic, capable and committed to supporting Edward for the rest of his life and to helping him maintain a relationship with his father. At the next PRT, the team will discuss the outcome of Ms. Jones' home study as well as next steps toward permanent guardianship.

**Names and likenesses have been changed to protect privacy.*