

parents, and the child to be adopted, but may make a decision without considering the religious background, training, or beliefs of these individuals if the court finds that the child does not have sufficient religious background, training, or beliefs to be factors in the adoption.

(3) IF THE PETITIONER IS A FOSTER PARENT, SHALL CONSIDER:

(i) THE LENGTH OF TIME THE CHILD HAS BEEN IN THE CARE OF THE FOSTER PARENT;

(ii) THE CHILD'S FEELINGS TOWARD AND EMOTIONAL TIES WITH THE FOSTER PARENT;

(iii) THE CHILD'S ADJUSTMENT TO THE FOSTER HOME, SCHOOL, AND COMMUNITY; AND

(iv) ANY OTHER RELEVANT FACTORS CONCERNING THE FOSTER CARE, CHILD, OR PARENT.

5-525.

(a) The Administration shall establish a program of foster care for minor children:

(1) who are placed in the custody of a local department, for a period of not more than 6 months, by a parent or legal guardian under a written agreement voluntarily entered into with the local department; or

(2) who are abused, abandoned, neglected, or dependent, if a juvenile court:

(i) has determined that continued residence in the child's home is contrary to the child's welfare; and

(ii) has committed the child to the custody or guardianship of a local department.

(b) The local department shall provide 24-hour a day care and supportive services for a child who is committed to its custody or guardianship in a licensed or approved foster family home, group home, or child care institution on a short term basis, while the local department develops and implements a permanent plan that is in the best interests of the child.

(c) In developing a permanent plan that is in the best interests of a child under foster care, the local department shall consider the following, in descending order of priority:

(1) returning the child to the child's parent or guardian, UNLESS THE DEPARTMENT IS THE GUARDIAN;