

(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;
- (2) placing the child with relatives;
- (3) adoption;
- (4) an independent living arrangement; or
- (5) in exceptional situations as defined by rule or regulation, long term foster care.

(d) (1) The Administration shall adopt rules and regulations that, for the 12-month period beginning on October 1, 1983, and for each subsequent 12-month period, establish specific goals as to the maximum number of children who will remain in foster care for more than 2 years.

(2) THE ADMINISTRATION SHALL ADOPT REGULATIONS TO IMPLEMENT THE PROVISIONS OF THIS PART III OF THIS SUBTITLE.

(3) THE REGULATIONS SHALL:

(I) PROHIBIT A CHILD FROM BEING COMMITTED TO THE CUSTODY OR GUARDIANSHIP OF THE ADMINISTRATION AND PLACED IN FOSTER CARE SOLELY BECAUSE THE CHILD'S PARENT OR GUARDIAN LACKS SHELTER; AND

(II) REQUIRE THE ADMINISTRATION TO PROVIDE MAKE APPROPRIATE REFERRALS TO EMERGENCY SHELTER AND OTHER SERVICES FOR FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN WHO LACK SHELTER.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect July 1, 1987.

Approved June 2, 1987.