

WILLIAM DONALD SCHAEFER, Governor

can be returned to the natural parent in the immediate future; and

(iv) a continuation of the relationship between the natural parent and the child would diminish greatly the child's prospects for early integration into a stable and permanent family.

(b) The court may find that a child is abandoned for purposes of this section if, after a thorough investigation by the child placement agency, the court finds that:

(1) the identity of the child's natural parents is unknown; and

(2) no one has claimed to be the child's natural parent within 2 months of the alleged abandonment of the child.

(c) In determining whether it is in the best interest of the child to terminate a natural parent's rights as to the child in any case, except the case of an abandoned child, the court shall consider:

(1) the timeliness, nature, and extent of the services offered by the child placement agency to facilitate reunion of the child with the natural parent;

(2) any social service agreement between the natural parent and the child placement agency, and the extent to which all parties have fulfilled their obligations under the agreement;

(3) the child's feelings toward and emotional ties with the child's natural parents, the child's siblings, and any other individuals who may significantly affect the child's best interest;

(4) the child's adjustment to home, school, and community; [and]

(5) the effort the natural parent has made to adjust the natural parent's circumstances, conduct, or conditions to make it in the best interest of the child to be returned to the natural parent's home, including:

(i) the extent to which the natural parent has maintained regular contact with the child under a plan to reunite the child with the natural parent, but the court may not give significant weight to any incidental visit, communication, or contribution;

(ii) if the natural parent is financially able, the payment of a reasonable part of the child's substitute physical care and maintenance;