

placement to the list of permissible permanency plans; altering a provision relating to long-term foster care; and generally relating to the development of a permanency plan for a child in foster care.

BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,

Article - Family Law

Section 5-525(c)

Annotated Code of Maryland

(1991 Replacement Volume and 1993 Supplement)

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

Article - Family Law

5-525.

(c) (1) In developing a permanency plan [that is in the best interests of] FOR a child under foster care, THE LOCAL DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES SHALL GIVE PRIMARY CONSIDERATION TO THE BEST INTERESTS OF THE CHILD. THE LOCAL DEPARTMENT SHALL CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING FACTORS IN DETERMINING THE PERMANENCY PLAN THAT IS IN THE BEST INTERESTS OF THE CHILD:

(I) THE CHILD'S ATTACHMENT AND EMOTIONAL TIES TO THE CHILD'S NATURAL PARENTS, SIBLINGS, AND RELATIVES AND SIBLINGS;

~~(II) THE CHILD'S EMOTIONAL ATTACHMENT TO THE CHILD'S CURRENT AND POTENTIAL CAREGIVERS AND THE CAREGIVERS' FAMILIES CAREGIVER AND THE CAREGIVER'S FAMILY;~~

~~(III) THE LENGTH OF TIME THE CHILD HAS RESIDED WITH CURRENT AND POTENTIAL CAREGIVERS THE CURRENT CAREGIVER;~~

~~(IV) THE CHILD'S ATTACHMENT AND EMOTIONAL TIES TO THE CHILD'S NATURAL PARENTS AND SIBLINGS;~~

(V) THE POTENTIAL EMOTIONAL, DEVELOPMENTAL, OR AND EDUCATIONAL HARM TO THE CHILD IF MOVED FROM THE CHILD'S CURRENT PLACEMENT; AND

(V) THE POTENTIAL HARM TO THE CHILD BY REMAINING IN STATE CUSTODY FOR AN EXCESSIVE PERIOD OF TIME.

(2) TO THE EXTENT CONSISTENT WITH THE BEST INTERESTS OF THE CHILD UNDER FOSTER CARE, the local department shall consider the following PERMANENCY PLANS, in descending order of priority:

[(1)](I) returning the child to the child's parent or guardian, unless the department is the guardian;

[(2)](II) placing the child with relatives to whom adoption, guardianship, or care and custody, in descending order of priority, are planned to be granted;