

20.1.

(a) The General Assembly declares that [it is] the policy of this State IS:

(1) To the extent that funds are available, to provide for and encourage the development of a continuum of quality education, treatment, and residential services for the children of this State;

(2) To serve children:

(i) In their homes; or

(ii) In the least restrictive setting most appropriate to their individual needs;

(3) That unless the State has determined that the individual needs of a [special needs] child ~~IN NEED OF RESIDENTIAL PLACEMENT WITH SPECIAL NEEDS~~ cannot be met through additional support to the HOME, nonresidential school, [home,] foster home, alternative living unit, or group home, the State may not fund the CHILD'S placement [of a child with special needs] in a more restrictive setting; and

(4) To prevent the unnecessary placement of children with special needs in [out-of-state institutions] ~~FACILITIES OUTSIDE OF THE CHILD'S HOME COMMUNITY.~~

(b) ~~[(1) By [December 31, 1992] JULY 1, 2003, the [Office for Children, Youth, and Families] SUBCABINET, in collaboration with the Committee appointed under [paragraph (4) of this subsection] SUBSECTION (F) OF THIS SECTION, shall develop a plan for [returning children with special needs in current out-of-state placements to Maryland and preventing future out-of-state placements].]~~

~~[(2) Except as provided in subsection (b)(3) and (c) of this section, the plan shall have a goal of returning all children with special needs from out-of-state placements by July 1, 1997.]~~

~~(3) The plan developed by the Office for Children, Youth, and Families and the Committee under paragraph (4) of this subsection shall include:~~

~~(i) How the State and local management boards under Section 11 of this article will develop the range and quality of services necessary for children with special needs to receive quality services within the State;~~

~~(ii) Any needed changes in rate setting and licensing;~~

~~(iii) Flexible funding strategies and resources for the development of a broad range of services to assist in returning children with special needs from out-of-state placements;~~

~~(iv) The amount and sources of funds needed to implement the plan;~~  
and