

~~Methods to successfully serve multiproblem families in the homes or family units have become more advanced and acceptable in the last decade and home based intervention has been recognized as a productive approach to assist families whose problems are serious and continuing; and~~

~~There is a central premise that children are best served in a family unit and children may be greatly harmed by unnecessary removal from the family and services that enhance family strengths realize more effective results along with substantial cost savings; and~~

~~Wherever possible the family oriented policy should be structured to remove the risk of harm rather than to remove the child from a family unit and designed to modify the home environment or the behavior and circumstances of household members to provide a safe, secure, family setting; now, therefore;~~

Preamble

WHEREAS, During Fiscal Year 1991, Maryland had a total of more than 20,000 children in State-funded out-of-home placements, and this number increases each year; and

WHEREAS, During Fiscal Year 1991, Maryland expended a total of about \$300 million for out-of-home placements, and this amount is increasing at a rate of approximately 16% per year; and

WHEREAS, The cost for out-of-home placements ranges from about \$1,500 to over \$100,000 with the cost of most of these placements over \$30,000; and

WHEREAS, The Maryland General Assembly and the Executive Branch believe that children are best served in a family unit and may be harmed by an unnecessary removal from their home and family; and

WHEREAS, National and state data have established that family preservation services reduce the risk of harm and prevent the removal of children and their out-of-home placement by using home-based crisis intervention services; and

WHEREAS, Low service worker caseloads, the provision of funds that service workers can use flexibly to purchase goods and services, and the use of interagency teamwork, when appropriate, can significantly reduce the need for out-of-home placement of many children; and

WHEREAS, Home-based crisis intervention services generally cost substantially less than out-of-home placements or result in a situation more conducive to the welfare of the children and their families; and

WHEREAS, The Maryland General Assembly has previously enacted budget language that permits appropriations to be used to prevent many out-of-home placements; now, therefore,

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