

5811-S

Sponsor(s): Senate Committee on Children & Family Services & Corrections (originally sponsored by Senators Hargrove, Stevens and McAuliffe)

Brief Description: Requiring greater opportunities for involvement of birth families in foster care.

SB 5811-S - DIGEST

(DIGEST AS ENACTED)

Finds that a large group of children spend a significant part of their lives in foster care. Each individual connected to a child in an out-of-home placement must have an abiding appreciation of the seriousness of the child's separation from his or her family and the past, whether that separation is short, long, or permanent in nature. It is the intent of the legislature to recognize and honor the history and the family connections that each child brings to an out-of-home placement.

Finds that creating and sanctioning a connection between a child's birth parents and foster family, when appropriate, can result in better relationships among birth families, children, foster families, and social workers. Creating and sanctioning this connection can result in greater foster placement stability and fewer disruptions for children, as well as greater satisfaction for foster parents and social workers.

Provides that, when a child is placed in out-of-home care foster parents are encouraged to: (1) Provide consultation to the foster care team based upon their experience with the child placed in their care;

(2) Assist the birth parents by helping them understand their child's needs and correlating appropriate parenting responses;

(3) Participate in educational activities, and enter into community-building activities with birth families and other foster families; and

(4) Transport children to family time visits with birth families and assist children and their families in maximizing the purposefulness of family time.