

When the best interests of the child are at issue, the courts have broad discretion in formulating remedies to achieve that goal.

In this case out of the Goochland County, the infant child was placed in foster care because the mother was found to be unfit, primarily due to substance abuse problems. The natural mother wanted the child to be adopted, arguing that would be in her best interests, rather than continuing in foster care. The county social services department discussed adoption with the foster care parents, and adoption was going to be the goal until the foster care father became ill. His illness affected the family's finances and ability to obtain private health insurance for the child.

By remaining in permanent foster care, the child could remain with her foster care parents and still receive Medicaid and other state benefits. If the goal were changed to adoption, then the child would not be able to remain with her foster care family. On this basis, the trial court determined that adoption was not in the child's best interest and not a reasonable alternative for long-term placement. The child was thriving with her foster care parents, and considered their house her home.