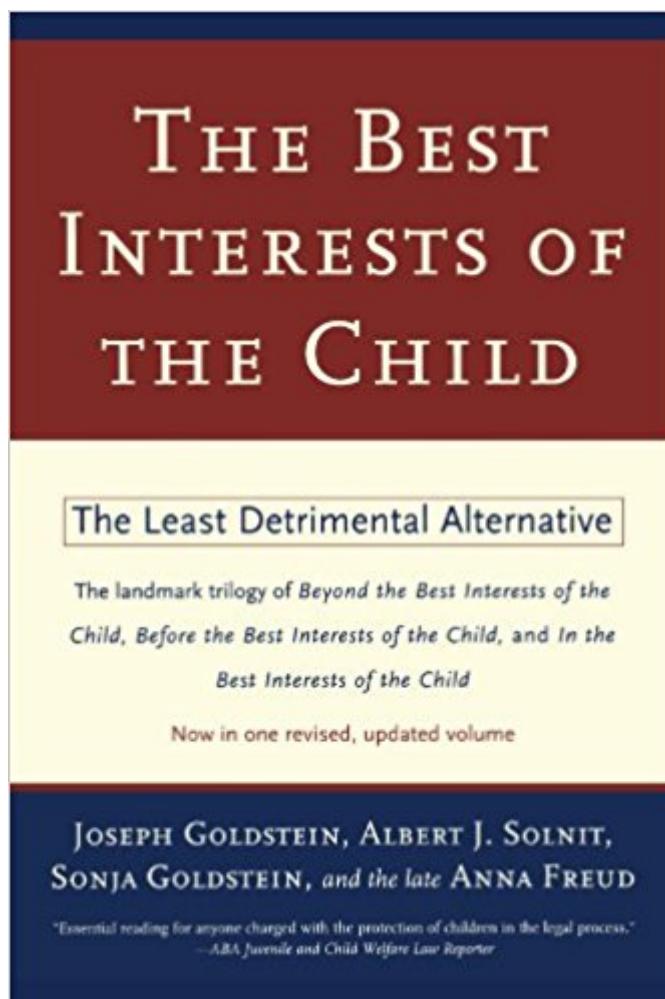


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The Best Interests Of The Child: The Least Detrimental Alternative



Synopsis

What principles should guide the courts in deciding the fate of hundreds of thousands of children involved every year in parental divorces and family breakdowns? What should justify state intrusion on the privacy of family relationships? How should professionals - judges, lawyers, social workers, psychiatrists, and psychologists - conduct themselves in pursuing "the best interests" of children who have been abandoned, neglected, or abused? The agonizing dilemmas posed by these three questions were the subject of one of the seminal publishing events in the history of The Free press. The result has been a set of historic guidelines which forms the basis of their landmark trilogy Beyond the Best Interests of the Child, Before the Best Interests of the Child, and In the Best Interests of the Child, published between 1973 and 1986. The authors speak in one voice in concluding that the continuity of care - continuity of a child's relationship with his or her adult caregiver - is a universal essential to the child's well-being. To this end, they stress that minimizing intrusions by the law is paramount to safeguarding the child's growth and development. "The least detrimental alternative" - the authors overarching guideline for assuring the continuity of the psychological parent-child relationship - has been cited in more than a thousand child custody cases since 1973.

Book Information

Paperback: 352 pages

Publisher: Free Press; 1 edition (February 8, 1998)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0684835460

ISBN-13: 978-0684835464

Product Dimensions: 6.1 x 0.8 x 9.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.3 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.9 out of 5 stars 9 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #954,670 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #69 in Books > Law > Family Law > Child Advocacy #118 in Books > Law > Family Law > Parental & Juvenile #185 in Books > Law > Family Law > Domestic Relations

Customer Reviews

This consolidation of a classic trilogy (Beyond the Best Interests of the Child, 1980; Before the Best Interests of the Child, 1984; and In the Best Interests of the Child, 1986) that first appeared 23 years ago concerns the welfare of children in contested relationships. Rather than the familiar legal "best

"interests of the child" doctrine, this work is grounded in the more realistic standard of finding the "least detrimental alternative." The eminent authors, including Yale law professor Goldstein and the late Anna Freud, discuss the needs of "Baby Richard" and other children forced into the legal system, the conditions that warrant state intervention, and the ethical conduct of professionals who function in the system. Their analysis combines psychoanalytic theories with legal examinations. Because laws vary by jurisdiction, the book serves as a general guide for those involved in placement decisions. Many conclusions, including rejections of custodial arrangements involving forced visitation and the unquestioned primacy of birth parents, are controversial. Still, the book is tightly argued and well presented, and the updated references are very useful. For family law collections; libraries that hold only some of the earlier editions should consider this economic consolidation. Antoinette Brinkman, Southwest Indiana Mental Health Ctr. Lib., Evansville Copyright 1996 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Joseph Goldstein has been leading insight and loving-kindness meditation retreats worldwide since 1974. He is a cofounder of the Insight Meditation Society (IMS) in Massachusetts, where he continues as one of the resident guiding teachers. In 1989, together with several other teachers and students, he established the Barre Center for Buddhist Studies and, later, The Forest Refuge. A seminal figure in the emergence of Buddhism in the West, Joseph is the author of numerous books including *One Dharma*. He lives in Barre, Massachusetts.

This book was written by lawyers, so I don't recommend reading it late at night. It is not written on the sixth grade level like most books. I do highly recommend it to anyone interested in the subject matter.

Previously used in child custody evaluations/determinations. See update: Beyond the Best Interests of the Child.

These three books have originated a problem in family law with the concept "psychological parent." These three books are useful to a guide for lawyers and the concerned family.

Great read for Guardian ad Litem or anyone who represents children in the foster care system.

A classic.

Presents a different positive approach to the "best interests of the child approach" that should be considered each time a case is presented

Best Interest of the Child is both a legal term, and principle, but it is not the same as best interest from a psychological or science perspective. This is a well researched and articulate exploration of the conflict between competing legal terminology and principles, and application of those principles in the life of children.

This book should be mandatory reading for all those who aspire to be advocates for children-anyone in the family court system (judges, lawyers, guardian ad litem), legislators and most especially workers in the child protection services.

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