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1	A bill to be entitled
2	An act relating to education for children and young
3	adults in out-of-home care; amending s. 39.4085, F.S.;
4	requiring a case manager or other staff member to
5	provide a child with verbal and written information
6	about certain topics; removing limitations on the type
7	of questions a child may ask; establishing the Office
8	of the Children's Ombudsman within the Department of
9	Children and Families; specifying responsibilities of
10	the office; requiring the department to consult with
11	specified children and young adults when creating or
12	revising certain print or digital written information;
13	conforming provisions to changes made by the act;
14	providing an effective date.
15	
16	Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:
17	
18	Section 1. Paragraph (a) of subsection (3) of section
19	39.4085, Florida Statutes, is amended, and subsections (4) and
20	(5) are added to that section, to read:
21	39.4085 Goals for dependent children; responsibilities;
22	education; Office of the Children's Ombudsman
23	(3)(a) The case manager or other staff shall provide <u>, at a</u>
24	<u>minimum</u> , verbal and written <u>:</u>
25	1. Instructions to a child entering shelter or foster care
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26 to educate the child on identifying and reporting abuse, 27 abandonment, or neglect. 28 2. Information to a child about laws and requirements 29 relating to the topic of normalcy and what that means for a 30 child in out-of-home care; education; participation in court proceedings; participation in permanency planning, transition 31 32 planning, and other case planning; placement, visitation, and contact with siblings, family, and other individuals who are 33 34 important to the child; and access to food, clothing, shelter, 35 and health care. 36 37 The verbal and written instructions and information must use 38 words and phrasing that each child can understand and must occur 39 in a manner that is most effective for each child. The written instructions and information are only required if the child is 40 41 of a sufficient age and understanding to receive such 42 instructions and information. The case manager or other staff must give each child the opportunity to ask questions about his 43 44 or her rights and how to identify and report abuse, abandonment, 45 or neglect. The case manager or other staff shall document in 46 court reports and case notes the date the instructions and 47 information were was provided to the child. The case manager or other staff must review the instructions and information with 48 49 the child every 6 months and upon every placement change until the child leaves shelter or foster care. 50

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51	(4) The Office of the Children's Ombudsman is established
52	within the department. To the extent permitted by available
53	resources, the office shall, at a minimum:
54	(a) Receive complaints from children and young adults
55	about placement, care, and services and assist in mediating such
56	concerns.
57	(b) Be a resource to identify and explain relevant polices
58	or procedures to children, young adults, and their caregivers.
59	(c) Provide recommendations to the department to address
60	systemic problems that are leading to complaints from children
61	and young adults.
62	(5) The department shall consult with children and young
63	adults who are currently or have formerly been in out-of-home
64	care when creating or revising any print or digital written
65	information used in implementing this section and use any
66	responses or feedback to ensure that such print or digital
67	written information is understandable by and appropriate and
68	useful for the children and young adults of the ages for which
69	such print or digital written information is intended.
70	Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2023.
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