

THE FLORIDA SENATE
2019 SUMMARY OF LEGISLATION PASSED
Committee on Children, Families, and Elder Affairs

CS/SB 124 — Dependent Children

by Judiciary Committee and Senators Bean, Montford, Harrell, and Cruz

The bill addresses the complications that arise when a dependent child or young adult is involved in legal proceedings in multiple courts and jurisdictions.

For example, the courts of the county having jurisdiction over a child's dependency case lose jurisdiction to appoint a guardian for the child if the child is placed in a living arrangement outside of that county. Similarly, the courts of the county having jurisdiction over an incapacitated young adult's dependency case lose jurisdiction to appoint a guardian for the young adult if he or she is placed in a specialized and supportive living arrangement outside of the county. The bill addresses this issue by creating an additional guardianship venue provision that permits venue in the county with jurisdiction of the dependency case.

The bill also addresses issues concerning a dependent child who is involved in juvenile justice proceedings. In addressing these issues, the bill:

- Permits the court, before making a final disposition in juvenile proceedings, to receive and consider any information provided by the Guardian Ad Litem Program and the child's attorney ad litem, if appointed, when the child is also under the jurisdiction of a dependency court;
- Requires the Department of Juvenile Justice to notify the dependency court, the Department of Children and Families, and if appointed, the Guardian Ad Litem Program and the child's attorney ad litem before transferring a dependent child who is in the custody of the Department of Juvenile Justice from one facility or program to another;
- Permits a court, when receiving a quarterly report in juvenile proceedings, to receive and consider any information provided by the Guardian Ad Litem Program or the child's attorney ad litem, if appointed, if the child is under the jurisdiction of a dependency court; and
- Adds the Guardian Ad Litem Program to the group of entities that may serve on a community reentry team that helps a youth transition from a residential commitment facility to adulthood.

If approved by the Governor, these provisions take effect upon becoming law.

Vote: Senate 39-0; House 116-0