

1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to the welfare of children; amending s.
3 39.001, F.S.; providing additional purposes of ch. 39,
4 F.S.; revising legislative intent; creating the Office of
5 Child Abuse Prevention within the Executive Office of the
6 Governor; directing the Governor to appoint a director of
7 the office; providing duties and responsibilities of the
8 director; providing procedures for evaluation of child
9 abuse prevention programs; requiring a report to the
10 Governor, Legislature, secretaries of certain state
11 agencies, and certain committees of the Legislature;
12 providing for information to be included in the report;
13 providing for the development and implementation of a
14 state plan for the coordination of child abuse prevention
15 programs and services; establishing a Child Abuse
16 Prevention Advisory Council; providing for membership,
17 duties, and responsibilities; requiring requests for
18 funding to be based on the state plan; providing for
19 review and revision of the state plan; granting rulemaking
20 authority to the Executive Office of the Governor;
21 requiring the Legislature to evaluate the office by a
22 specified date; amending s. 39.0014, F.S.; providing
23 responsibilities of the office under ch. 39, F.S.;
24 amending s. 39.01, F.S.; providing and revising
25 definitions; amending s. 39.202, F.S.; providing access to
26 records for agencies that provide early intervention and
27 prevention services; amending ss. 39.0015 and 39.302,
28 F.S.; conforming cross-references; amending s. 402.164,

29 F.S.; establishing legislative intent for the statewide
30 and local advocacy councils; amending s. 402.165, F.S.;
31 providing guidelines for selection of the executive
32 director of the Florida Statewide Advocacy Council;
33 establishing a process for investigating reports of abuse;
34 revising council meeting requirements; providing
35 requirements for interagency agreements; requiring
36 interagency agreements to be renewed annually and
37 submitted to the Governor by a specified date; amending s.
38 409.1451, F.S., relating to independent living transition
39 services; revising eligibility requirements for certain
40 young adults; revising duties of the Department of
41 Children and Family Services regarding independent living
42 transition services; including additional parties in the
43 review of a child's academic performance; requiring the
44 department or a community-based care lead agency under
45 contract with the department to develop a plan for
46 delivery of such services; requiring additional aftercare
47 support services; providing additional qualifications to
48 receive an award under the Road-to-Independence Program;
49 providing procedures for the payment of awards; requiring
50 collaboration between certain parties in the development
51 of a plan regarding the provision of transitional
52 services; requiring a community-based care lead agency to
53 develop a plan for purchase and delivery of such services
54 and requiring department approval prior to implementation;
55 permitting the Independent Living Services Advisory
56 Council to have access to certain data held by the

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57 department and certain agencies; amending s. 409.175,
58 F.S.; revising the definition of the term "boarding
59 school" to require such schools to meet certain standards
60 within a specified timeframe; amending ss. 39.013, 39.701,
61 and 1009.25, F.S.; conforming references to changes made
62 by the act; providing an appropriation; providing an
63 effective date.

64
65 WHEREAS, in 2002, Florida was among only three other states
66 and the District of Columbia to have the highest national child
67 maltreatment rate, and

68 WHEREAS, during 2002, 142,547 investigations of abuse or
69 neglect, involving 254,856 children, were completed,
70 approximately one-half of which were substantiated or indicated
71 the presence of abuse or neglect, and

72 WHEREAS, a Florida child is abused or neglected every 4
73 minutes and 10,000 Florida children are abused or neglected per
74 month, and

75 WHEREAS, in 2004, according to the Florida Child Abuse
76 Death Review Team, at least 111 Florida children died from abuse
77 or neglect at the hands of their parents or caretakers, an
78 average rate of two dead children each week, and

79 WHEREAS, according to the Centers for Disease Control and
80 Prevention, the cost of failing to prevent child abuse and
81 neglect in 2001 equaled \$94 billion a year nationally, and

82 WHEREAS, the direct costs of failing to prevent child abuse
83 and neglect include the costs associated with the utilization of
84 law enforcement services, the health care system, the mental

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85 health system, the child welfare system, and the judicial
86 system, while the indirect costs include the provision of
87 special education and mental health and health care, a rise in
88 the incidence of juvenile delinquency, lost productivity to
89 society, and adult criminality, and

90 WHEREAS, although prevention of child maltreatment will
91 save lives and conserve resources, and despite the potential
92 long-term benefit of preventing child abuse and neglect, only a
93 small percentage of all resources specifically earmarked for
94 child maltreatment in the state are actually devoted to the
95 prevention of child maltreatment, and

96 WHEREAS, the 2005-2006 General Appropriations Act provided
97 a total funding of \$44 million for child abuse prevention and
98 intervention to the Department of Children and Family Services,
99 which amount represents less than 2 percent of the department's
100 budget, and

101 WHEREAS, Healthy Families Florida is a community-based,
102 voluntary home visiting program that received approximately
103 \$28.4 million for the 2005-2006 fiscal year from the Department
104 of Children and Family Services and contracts with 37 community-
105 based organizations to provide services in targeted high-risk
106 areas in 23 counties and to provide services in 30 total
107 counties, and

108 WHEREAS, Healthy Families Florida participants had 20
109 percent less child maltreatment than all families in the Healthy
110 Families Florida target service areas in spite of the fact that,
111 in general, participants are at a significantly higher risk for
112 child maltreatment than the overall population, and

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113 WHEREAS, the Department of Children and Family Services,
 114 the Department of Education, the Department of Health, the
 115 Department of Juvenile Justice, the Department of Law
 116 Enforcement, the Agency for Persons with Disabilities, and the
 117 Agency for Workforce Innovation all have programs that focus on
 118 primary and secondary prevention of child abuse and neglect, but
 119 there is no statewide coordination or single state agency
 120 responsible for oversight of these programs, and

121 WHEREAS, a statewide coordinated effort would result in
 122 better communication among agencies and provide for easier
 123 access and more efficiency in the delivery of abuse and neglect
 124 services in the communities, NOW, THEREFORE,

125

126 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

127

128 Section 1. Subsections (1) and (6) of section 39.001,
 129 Florida Statutes, are amended, subsections (7) and (8) are
 130 renumbered as subsections (8) and (9) and amended, present
 131 subsection (9) is renumbered as subsection (10), and new
 132 subsections (7), (11), and (12) are added to that section, to
 133 read:

134 39.001 Purposes and intent; personnel standards and
 135 screening.--

136 (1) PURPOSES OF CHAPTER.--The purposes of this chapter
 137 are:

138 (a) To provide for the care, safety, and protection of
 139 children in an environment that fosters healthy social,
 140 emotional, intellectual, and physical development; to ensure

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141 secure and safe custody; ~~and~~ to promote the health and well-
142 being of all children under the state's care; and to prevent the
143 occurrence of child abuse, neglect, and abandonment.

144 (b) To recognize that most families desire to be competent
145 caregivers and providers for their children and that children
146 achieve their greatest potential when families are able to
147 support and nurture the growth and development of their
148 children. Therefore, the Legislature finds that policies and
149 procedures that provide for prevention and intervention through
150 the department's child protection system should be based on the
151 following principles:

152 1. The health and safety of the children served shall be
153 of paramount concern.

154 2. The prevention and intervention should engage families
155 in constructive, supportive, and nonadversarial relationships.

156 3. The prevention and intervention should intrude as
157 little as possible into the life of the family, be focused on
158 clearly defined objectives, and take the most parsimonious path
159 to remedy a family's problems.

160 4. The prevention and intervention should be based upon
161 outcome evaluation results that demonstrate success in
162 protecting children and supporting families.

163 (c) To provide a child protection system that reflects a
164 partnership between the department, other agencies, and local
165 communities.

166 (d) To provide a child protection system that is sensitive
167 to the social and cultural diversity of the state.

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168 (e) To provide procedures which allow the department to
169 respond to reports of child abuse, abandonment, or neglect in
170 the most efficient and effective manner that ensures the health
171 and safety of children and the integrity of families.

172 (f) To preserve and strengthen the child's family ties
173 whenever possible, removing the child from parental custody only
174 when his or her welfare cannot be adequately safeguarded without
175 such removal.

176 (g) To ensure that the parent or legal custodian from
177 whose custody the child has been taken assists the department to
178 the fullest extent possible in locating relatives suitable to
179 serve as caregivers for the child.

180 (h) To ensure that permanent placement with the biological
181 or adoptive family is achieved as soon as possible for every
182 child in foster care and that no child remains in foster care
183 longer than 1 year.

184 (i) To secure for the child, when removal of the child
185 from his or her own family is necessary, custody, care, and
186 discipline as nearly as possible equivalent to that which should
187 have been given by the parents; and to ensure, in all cases in
188 which a child must be removed from parental custody, that the
189 child is placed in an approved relative home, licensed foster
190 home, adoptive home, or independent living program that provides
191 the most stable and potentially permanent living arrangement for
192 the child, as determined by the court. All placements shall be
193 in a safe environment where drugs and alcohol are not abused.

194 (j) To ensure that, when reunification or adoption is not
195 possible, the child will be prepared for alternative permanency

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196 goals or placements, to include, but not be limited to, long-
197 term foster care, independent living, custody to a relative on a
198 permanent basis with or without legal guardianship, or custody
199 to a foster parent or legal custodian on a permanent basis with
200 or without legal guardianship.

201 (k) To make every possible effort, when two or more
202 children who are in the care or under the supervision of the
203 department are siblings, to place the siblings in the same home;
204 and in the event of permanent placement of the siblings, to
205 place them in the same adoptive home or, if the siblings are
206 separated, to keep them in contact with each other.

207 (l) To provide judicial and other procedures to assure due
208 process through which children, parents, and guardians and other
209 interested parties are assured fair hearings by a respectful and
210 respected court or other tribunal and the recognition,
211 protection, and enforcement of their constitutional and other
212 legal rights, while ensuring that public safety interests and
213 the authority and dignity of the courts are adequately
214 protected.

215 (m) To ensure that children under the jurisdiction of the
216 courts are provided equal treatment with respect to goals,
217 objectives, services, and case plans, without regard to the
218 location of their placement. It is the further intent of the
219 Legislature that, when children are removed from their homes,
220 disruption to their education be minimized to the extent
221 possible.

222 (n) To create and maintain an integrated prevention
223 framework that enables local communities, state agencies, and

224 organizations to collaborate to implement efficient and properly
 225 applied evidence-based child abuse prevention practices.

226 (6) LEGISLATIVE INTENT FOR THE PREVENTION OF ABUSE,
 227 ABANDONMENT, AND NEGLECT OF CHILDREN.--The incidence of known
 228 child abuse, abandonment, and neglect has increased rapidly over
 229 the past 5 years. The impact that abuse, abandonment, or neglect
 230 has on the victimized child, siblings, family structure, and
 231 inevitably on all citizens of the state has caused the
 232 Legislature to determine that the prevention of child abuse,
 233 abandonment, and neglect shall be a priority of this state. To
 234 further this end, it is the intent of the Legislature that an
 235 Office of Child Abuse Prevention be established ~~a comprehensive~~
 236 ~~approach for the prevention of abuse, abandonment, and neglect~~
 237 ~~of children be developed for the state and that this planned,~~
 238 ~~comprehensive approach be used as a basis for funding.~~

239 (7) OFFICE OF CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION.--

240 (a) For purposes of establishing a comprehensive statewide
 241 approach for the prevention of child abuse, abandonment, and
 242 neglect, the Office of Child Abuse Prevention is created within
 243 the Executive Office of the Governor. The Governor shall appoint
 244 a director for the office who shall be subject to confirmation
 245 by the Senate.

246 (b) The director shall:

247 1. Formulate and recommend rules pertaining to
 248 implementation of child abuse prevention efforts.

249 2. Act as the Governor's liaison with state agencies,
 250 other state governments, and the public and private sectors on
 251 matters that relate to child abuse prevention.

252 3. Work to secure funding and other support for the
 253 state's child abuse prevention efforts, including, but not
 254 limited to, establishing cooperative relationships among state
 255 and private agencies.

256 4. Develop a strategic program and funding initiative that
 257 links the separate jurisdictional activities of state agencies
 258 with respect to child abuse prevention. The office may designate
 259 lead and contributing agencies to develop such initiatives.

260 5. Advise the Governor and the Legislature on child abuse
 261 trends in this state, the status of current child abuse
 262 prevention programs and services, the funding of those programs
 263 and services, and the status of the office with regard to the
 264 development and implementation of the state child abuse
 265 prevention strategy.

266 6. Develop child abuse prevention public awareness
 267 campaigns to be implemented throughout the state.

268 (c) The office is authorized and directed to:

269 1. Oversee the preparation and implementation of the state
 270 plan established under subsection (8) and revise and update the
 271 state plan as necessary.

272 2. Conduct, otherwise provide for, or make available
 273 continuing professional education and training in the prevention
 274 of child abuse and neglect.

275 3. Work to secure funding in the form of appropriations,
 276 gifts, and grants from the state, the Federal Government, and
 277 other public and private sources in order to ensure that
 278 sufficient funds are available for prevention efforts.

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- 279 4. Make recommendations pertaining to agreements or
280 contracts for the establishment and development of:
- 281 a. Programs and services for the prevention of child abuse
282 and neglect.
- 283 b. Training programs for the prevention of child abuse and
284 neglect.
- 285 c. Multidisciplinary and discipline-specific training
286 programs for professionals with responsibilities affecting
287 children, young adults, and families.
- 288 5. Monitor, evaluate, and review the development and
289 quality of local and statewide services and programs for the
290 prevention of child abuse and neglect and shall publish and
291 distribute an annual report of its findings on or before January
292 1 of each year to the Governor, the Speaker of the House of
293 Representatives, the President of the Senate, the secretary of
294 each state agency affected by the report, and the appropriate
295 substantive committees of the Legislature. The report shall
296 include:
- 297 a. A summary of the activities of the office.
- 298 b. A summary detailing the demographic and geographic
299 characteristics of families served by the prevention programs.
- 300 c. Recommendations, by state agency, for the further
301 development and improvement of services and programs for the
302 prevention of child abuse and neglect.
- 303 d. The budget requests and prevention program needs by
304 state agency.
- 305 (8) (7) PLAN FOR COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH.--

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306 (a) The office ~~department~~ shall develop a state plan for
307 the prevention of abuse, abandonment, and neglect of children
308 and shall submit the state plan to the Speaker of the House of
309 Representatives, the President of the Senate, and the Governor
310 no later than December 31, 2007 ~~January 1, 1983~~. The Department
311 of Children and Family Services, the Department of Corrections,
312 the Department of Education, the Department of Health, the
313 Department of Juvenile Justice, the Department of Law
314 Enforcement, the Agency for Persons with Disabilities, and the
315 Agency for Workforce Innovation ~~The Department of Education and~~
316 ~~the Division of Children's Medical Services Prevention and~~
317 ~~Intervention of the Department of Health~~ shall participate and
318 fully cooperate in the development of the state plan at both the
319 state and local levels. Furthermore, appropriate local agencies
320 and organizations shall be provided an opportunity to
321 participate in the development of the state plan at the local
322 level. Appropriate local groups and organizations shall include,
323 but not be limited to, community mental health centers; guardian
324 ad litem programs for children under the circuit court; the
325 school boards of the local school districts; the Florida local
326 advocacy councils; community-based care lead agencies; private
327 or public organizations or programs with recognized expertise in
328 working with child abuse prevention programs for children and
329 families; private or public organizations or programs with
330 recognized expertise in working with children who are sexually
331 abused, physically abused, emotionally abused, abandoned, or
332 neglected and with expertise in working with the families of
333 such children; private or public programs or organizations with

334 expertise in maternal and infant health care; multidisciplinary
 335 child protection teams; child day care centers; law enforcement
 336 agencies;~~;~~ and the circuit courts, when guardian ad litem
 337 programs are not available in the local area. The state plan to
 338 be provided to the Legislature and the Governor shall include,
 339 as a minimum, the information required of the various groups in
 340 paragraph (b).

341 (b) The development of the ~~comprehensive~~ state plan shall
 342 be accomplished in the following manner:

343 1. The office shall establish a Child Abuse Prevention
 344 Advisory Council composed of representatives from each state
 345 agency and appropriate local agencies and organizations
 346 specified in paragraph (a). The advisory council shall serve as
 347 the research arm of the office and ~~The department shall~~
 348 ~~establish an interprogram task force comprised of the Program~~
 349 ~~Director for Family Safety, or a designee, a representative from~~
 350 ~~the Child Care Services Program Office, a representative from~~
 351 ~~the Family Safety Program Office, a representative from the~~
 352 ~~Mental Health Program Office, a representative from the~~
 353 ~~Substance Abuse Program Office, a representative from the~~
 354 ~~Developmental Disabilities Program Office, and a representative~~
 355 ~~from the Division of Children's Medical Services Prevention and~~
 356 ~~Intervention of the Department of Health. Representatives of the~~
 357 ~~Department of Law Enforcement and of the Department of Education~~
 358 ~~shall serve as ex officio members of the interprogram task~~
 359 ~~force. The interprogram task force shall be responsible for:~~

360 a. Assisting in developing a plan of action for better
 361 coordination and integration of the goals, activities, and

362 funding pertaining to the prevention of child abuse,
363 abandonment, and neglect conducted by the office ~~department~~ in
364 order to maximize staff and resources at the state level. The
365 plan of action shall be included in the state plan.

366 b. Assisting in providing a basic format to be utilized by
367 the districts in the preparation of local plans of action in
368 order to provide for uniformity in the district plans and to
369 provide for greater ease in compiling information for the state
370 plan.

371 c. Providing the districts with technical assistance in
372 the development of local plans of action, if requested.

373 d. Assisting in examining the local plans to determine if
374 all the requirements of the local plans have been met and, if
375 they have not, informing the districts of the deficiencies and
376 requesting the additional information needed.

377 e. Assisting in preparing the state plan for submission to
378 the Legislature and the Governor. Such preparation shall include
379 the incorporation into the state plan ~~collapsing~~ of information
380 obtained from the local plans, the cooperative plans with the
381 members of the advisory council ~~Department of Education~~, and the
382 plan of action for coordination and integration of state
383 departmental activities ~~into one comprehensive plan~~. The state
384 ~~comprehensive~~ plan shall include a section reflecting general
385 conditions and needs, an analysis of variations based on
386 population or geographic areas, identified problems, and
387 recommendations for change. In essence, the state plan shall
388 provide an analysis and summary of each element of the local

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389 plans to provide a statewide perspective. The state plan shall
390 also include each separate local plan of action.

391 f. Conducting a feasibility study on the establishment of
392 a Children's Cabinet.

393 g.f. Working with the specified state agency in fulfilling
394 the requirements of subparagraphs 2., 3., 4., and 5.

395 2. The office, the department, the Department of
396 Education, and the Department of Health shall work together in
397 developing ways to inform and instruct parents of school
398 children and appropriate district school personnel in all school
399 districts in the detection of child abuse, abandonment, and
400 neglect and in the proper action that should be taken in a
401 suspected case of child abuse, abandonment, or neglect, and in
402 caring for a child's needs after a report is made. The plan for
403 accomplishing this end shall be included in the state plan.

404 3. The office, the department, the Department of Law
405 Enforcement, and the Department of Health shall work together in
406 developing ways to inform and instruct appropriate local law
407 enforcement personnel in the detection of child abuse,
408 abandonment, and neglect and in the proper action that should be
409 taken in a suspected case of child abuse, abandonment, or
410 neglect.

411 4. Within existing appropriations, the office ~~department~~
412 shall work with other appropriate public and private agencies to
413 emphasize efforts to educate the general public about the
414 problem of and ways to detect child abuse, abandonment, and
415 neglect and in the proper action that should be taken in a

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416 suspected case of child abuse, abandonment, or neglect. The plan
417 for accomplishing this end shall be included in the state plan.

418 5. The office, the department, the Department of
419 Education, and the Department of Health shall work together on
420 the enhancement or adaptation of curriculum materials to assist
421 instructional personnel in providing instruction through a
422 multidisciplinary approach on the identification, intervention,
423 and prevention of child abuse, abandonment, and neglect. The
424 curriculum materials shall be geared toward a sequential program
425 of instruction at the four progressional levels, K-3, 4-6, 7-9,
426 and 10-12. Strategies for encouraging all school districts to
427 utilize the curriculum are to be included in the ~~comprehensive~~
428 state plan for the prevention of child abuse, abandonment, and
429 neglect.

430 6. Each district of the department shall develop a plan
431 for its specific geographical area. The plan developed at the
432 district level shall be submitted to the advisory council
433 ~~interprogram task force~~ for utilization in preparing the state
434 plan. The district local plan of action shall be prepared with
435 the involvement and assistance of the local agencies and
436 organizations listed in this paragraph ~~(a)~~, as well as
437 representatives from those departmental district offices
438 participating in the treatment and prevention of child abuse,
439 abandonment, and neglect. In order to accomplish this, the
440 office ~~district administrator in each district~~ shall establish a
441 task force on the prevention of child abuse, abandonment, and
442 neglect. The office ~~district administrator~~ shall appoint the
443 members of the task force in accordance with the membership

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444 requirements of this section. The office ~~In addition, the~~
445 ~~district administrator shall ensure that each subdistrict is~~
446 ~~represented on the task force; and, if the district does not~~
447 ~~have subdistricts, the district administrator~~ shall ensure that
448 both urban and rural areas are represented on the task force.
449 The task force shall develop a written statement clearly
450 identifying its operating procedures, purpose, overall
451 responsibilities, and method of meeting responsibilities. The
452 district plan of action to be prepared by the task force shall
453 include, but shall not be limited to:

454 a. Documentation of the magnitude of the problems of child
455 abuse, including sexual abuse, physical abuse, and emotional
456 abuse, and child abandonment and neglect in its geographical
457 area.

458 b. A description of programs currently serving abused,
459 abandoned, and neglected children and their families and a
460 description of programs for the prevention of child abuse,
461 abandonment, and neglect, including information on the impact,
462 cost-effectiveness, and sources of funding of such programs.

463 c. A continuum of programs and services necessary for a
464 comprehensive approach to the prevention of all types of child
465 abuse, abandonment, and neglect as well as a brief description
466 of such programs and services.

467 d. A description, documentation, and priority ranking of
468 local needs related to child abuse, abandonment, and neglect
469 prevention based upon the continuum of programs and services.

470 e. A plan for steps to be taken in meeting identified
471 needs, including the coordination and integration of services to

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472 avoid unnecessary duplication and cost, and for alternative
 473 funding strategies for meeting needs through the reallocation of
 474 existing resources, utilization of volunteers, contracting with
 475 local universities for services, and local government or private
 476 agency funding.

477 f. A description of barriers to the accomplishment of a
 478 comprehensive approach to the prevention of child abuse,
 479 abandonment, and neglect.

480 g. Recommendations for changes that can be accomplished
 481 only at the state program level or by legislative action.

482 (9)~~(8)~~ FUNDING AND SUBSEQUENT PLANS.--

483 (a) All budget requests submitted by the office, the
 484 department, the Department of Health, the Department of
 485 Education, the Department of Juvenile Justice, the Department of
 486 Corrections, the Agency for Persons with Disabilities, the
 487 Agency for Workforce Innovation, or any other agency to the
 488 Legislature for funding of efforts for the prevention of child
 489 abuse, abandonment, and neglect shall be based on the state plan
 490 developed pursuant to this section.

491 (b) The office ~~department at the state and district levels~~
 492 and the other agencies and organizations listed in paragraph
 493 (8) (a) ~~(7) (a)~~ shall readdress the state plan and make necessary
 494 revisions every 5 years, at a minimum. Such revisions shall be
 495 submitted to the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the
 496 President of the Senate no later than June 30 of each year
 497 divisible by 5. At least biennially, the office shall review the
 498 state plan and make any necessary revisions based on changing
 499 needs and program evaluation results. An annual progress report

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500 shall be submitted to update the state plan in the years between
 501 the 5-year intervals. In order to avoid duplication of effort,
 502 these required plans may be made a part of or merged with other
 503 plans required by either the state or Federal Government, so
 504 long as the portions of the other state or Federal Government
 505 plan that constitute the state plan for the prevention of child
 506 abuse, abandonment, and neglect are clearly identified as such
 507 and are provided to the Speaker of the House of Representatives
 508 and the President of the Senate as required above.

509 (11) RULEMAKING.--The Executive Office of the Governor
 510 shall adopt rules pursuant to ss. 120.536(1) and 120.54 to
 511 implement the provisions of this section.

512 (12) EVALUATION.--By February 1, 2009, the Legislature
 513 shall evaluate the office and determine whether it should
 514 continue to be housed in the Executive Office of the Governor or
 515 transferred to a state agency.

516 Section 2. Section 39.0014, Florida Statutes, is amended
 517 to read:

518 39.0014 Responsibilities of public agencies.--All state,
 519 county, and local agencies shall cooperate, assist, and provide
 520 information to the Office of Child Abuse Prevention ~~department~~
 521 as will enable it to fulfill its responsibilities under this
 522 chapter.

523 Section 3. Paragraph (b) of subsection (3) of section
 524 39.0015, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

525 39.0015 Child abuse prevention training in the district
 526 school system.--

527 (3) DEFINITIONS.--As used in this section:

528 (b) "Child abuse" means those acts as defined in ss.
 529 39.01(1), (2), (30), (43), (45), (53)~~(52)~~, and (64)~~(63)~~, 827.04,
 530 and 984.03(1), (2), and (37).

531 Section 4. Subsections (47) through (72) of section 39.01,
 532 Florida Statutes, are renumbered as subsections (48) through
 533 (73), present subsections (10) and (47) are amended, and a new
 534 subsection (47) is added to that section, to read:

535 39.01 Definitions.--When used in this chapter, unless the
 536 context otherwise requires:

537 (10) "Caregiver" means the parent, legal custodian, adult
 538 household member, or other person responsible for a child's
 539 welfare as defined in subsection (48) ~~(47)~~.

540 (47) "Office" means the Office of Child Abuse Prevention
 541 within the Executive Office of the Governor.

542 (48)~~(47)~~ "Other person responsible for a child's welfare"
 543 includes the child's legal guardian, legal custodian, or foster
 544 parent; an employee of any ~~a private~~ school, public or private
 545 child day care center, residential home, institution, facility,
 546 or agency; or any other person legally responsible for the
 547 child's welfare in a residential setting; and also includes an
 548 adult sitter or relative entrusted with a child's care. For the
 549 purpose of departmental investigative jurisdiction, this
 550 definition does not include law enforcement officers, or
 551 employees of municipal or county detention facilities or the
 552 Department of Corrections, while acting in an official capacity.

553 Section 5. Paragraph (a) of subsection (2) of section
 554 39.202, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

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555 39.202 Confidentiality of reports and records in cases of
 556 child abuse or neglect.--

557 (2) Except as provided in subsection (4), access to such
 558 records, excluding the name of the reporter which shall be
 559 released only as provided in subsection (5), shall be granted
 560 only to the following persons, officials, and agencies:

561 (a) Employees, authorized agents, or contract providers of
 562 the department, the Department of Health, or county agencies
 563 responsible for carrying out:

- 564 1. Child or adult protective investigations;
- 565 2. Ongoing child or adult protective services;
- 566 3. Early intervention and prevention services;

567 ~~4.3. Healthy Start services; or~~

568 ~~5.4. Licensure or approval of adoptive homes, foster~~
 569 ~~homes, or child care facilities, or family day care homes or~~
 570 ~~informal child care providers who receive subsidized child care~~
 571 ~~funding, or other homes used to provide for the care and welfare~~
 572 ~~of children; or~~

573 ~~6.5. Services for victims of domestic violence when~~
 574 ~~provided by certified domestic violence centers working at the~~
 575 ~~department's request as case consultants or with shared clients.~~

576
 577 Also, employees or agents of the Department of Juvenile Justice
 578 responsible for the provision of services to children, pursuant
 579 to chapters 984 and 985.

580 Section 6. Subsection (1) of section 39.302, Florida
 581 Statutes, is amended to read:

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582 39.302 Protective investigations of institutional child
583 abuse, abandonment, or neglect.--

584 (1) The department shall conduct a child protective
585 investigation of each report of institutional child abuse,
586 abandonment, or neglect. Upon receipt of a report that alleges
587 that an employee or agent of the department, or any other entity
588 or person covered by s. 39.01(31) or (48)~~(47)~~, acting in an
589 official capacity, has committed an act of child abuse,
590 abandonment, or neglect, the department shall initiate a child
591 protective investigation within the timeframe established by the
592 central abuse hotline pursuant to s. 39.201(5) and orally notify
593 the appropriate state attorney, law enforcement agency, and
594 licensing agency. These agencies shall immediately conduct a
595 joint investigation, unless independent investigations are more
596 feasible. When conducting investigations onsite or having face-
597 to-face interviews with the child, such investigation visits
598 shall be unannounced unless it is determined by the department
599 or its agent that such unannounced visits would threaten the
600 safety of the child. When a facility is exempt from licensing,
601 the department shall inform the owner or operator of the
602 facility of the report. Each agency conducting a joint
603 investigation shall be entitled to full access to the
604 information gathered by the department in the course of the
605 investigation. A protective investigation must include an onsite
606 visit of the child's place of residence. In all cases, the
607 department shall make a full written report to the state
608 attorney within 3 working days after making the oral report. A
609 criminal investigation shall be coordinated, whenever possible,

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610 with the child protective investigation of the department. Any
 611 interested person who has information regarding the offenses
 612 described in this subsection may forward a statement to the
 613 state attorney as to whether prosecution is warranted and
 614 appropriate. Within 15 days after the completion of the
 615 investigation, the state attorney shall report the findings to
 616 the department and shall include in such report a determination
 617 of whether or not prosecution is justified and appropriate in
 618 view of the circumstances of the specific case.

619 Section 7. Subsection (1) of section 402.164, Florida
 620 Statutes, is amended to read:

621 402.164 Legislative intent; definitions.--

622 (1) (a) It is the intent of the Legislature to use citizen
 623 volunteers as members of the Florida Statewide Advocacy Council
 624 and the Florida local advocacy councils, and to have volunteers
 625 operate a network of councils that shall, without interference
 626 by an executive agency, undertake to discover, monitor,
 627 investigate, and determine the presence of conditions or
 628 individuals that constitute a threat to the rights, health,
 629 safety, or welfare of persons who receive services from state
 630 agencies.

631 (b) It is the further intent of the Legislature that the
 632 monitoring and investigation shall safeguard the health, safety,
 633 and welfare of consumers of services provided by these state
 634 agencies.

635 (c) It is the further intent of the Legislature that state
 636 agencies cooperate with the councils in forming interagency
 637 agreements to provide the councils with authorized client

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638 records so that the councils may monitor services and
639 investigate claims.

640 Section 8. Subsections (5) and (7) of section 402.165,
641 Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

642 402.165 Florida Statewide Advocacy Council; confidential
643 records and meetings.--

644 (5)(a) Members of the statewide council shall receive no
645 compensation, but are entitled to be reimbursed for per diem and
646 travel expenses in accordance with s. 112.061.

647 (b) The Governor shall select an executive director who
648 shall serve at the pleasure of the Governor and shall perform
649 the duties delegated to him or her by the council. The
650 compensation of the executive director and staff shall be
651 established in accordance with the rules of the Selected Exempt
652 Service. The Governor shall give priority consideration in the
653 selection of an executive director to an individual with
654 professional expertise in research design, statistical analysis,
655 or agency evaluation and analysis.

656 (c) The council may apply for, receive, and accept grants,
657 gifts, donations, bequests, and other payments including money
658 or property, real or personal, tangible or intangible, and
659 service from any governmental or other public or private entity
660 or person and make arrangements as to the use of same.

661 (d) The statewide council shall annually prepare a budget
662 request that, after it is approved by the council, shall be
663 submitted to the Governor. The budget shall include a request
664 for funds to carry out the activities of the statewide council
665 and the local councils.

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666 (7) The responsibilities of the statewide council include,
667 but are not limited to:

668 (a) Serving as an independent third-party mechanism for
669 protecting the constitutional and human rights of clients within
670 programs or facilities operated, funded, or contracted by any
671 state agency that provides client services.

672 (b) Monitoring, by site visit and through access to
673 records, the delivery and use of services, programs, or
674 facilities operated, funded, or contracted by any state agency
675 that provides client services, for the purpose of preventing
676 abuse or deprivation of the constitutional and human rights of
677 clients. The statewide council may conduct an unannounced site
678 visit or monitoring visit that involves the inspection of
679 records if the visit is conditioned upon a complaint. A
680 complaint may be generated by the council itself, after
681 consulting with the Governor's office, if information from any
682 state agency that provides client services or from other sources
683 indicates a situation at the program or facility that indicates
684 possible abuse or neglect or deprivation of the constitutional
685 and human rights of clients. The statewide council shall
686 establish and follow uniform criteria for the review of
687 information and generation of complaints. The statewide council
688 shall develop a written protocol for all complaints it generates
689 to provide the Governor's office with information including the
690 nature of the abuse or neglect, the agencies involved, the
691 populations or numbers of individuals affected, the types of
692 records necessary to complete the investigation, and a strategy
693 for approaching the problem. Routine program monitoring and

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694 reviews that do not require an examination of records may be
695 made unannounced.

696 (c) Receiving, investigating, and resolving reports of
697 abuse or deprivation of constitutional and human rights referred
698 to the statewide council by a local council. If a matter
699 constitutes a threat to the life, safety, or health of clients
700 or is multiservice-area in scope, the statewide council may
701 exercise its powers without the necessity of a referral from a
702 local council.

703 (d) Reviewing existing programs or services and new or
704 revised programs of the state agencies that provide client
705 services and making recommendations as to how the rights of
706 clients are affected.

707 (e) Submitting an annual report to the Legislature, no
708 later than December 30 of each calendar year, concerning
709 activities, recommendations, and complaints reviewed or
710 developed by the council during the year.

711 (f) Conducting meetings at least one time ~~six times~~ a year
712 at the call of the chair and at other times at the call of the
713 Governor or by written request of eight ~~six~~ members of the
714 council including the executive director.

715 (g) Developing and adopting uniform procedures to be used
716 to carry out the purpose and responsibilities of the statewide
717 council and the local councils.

718 (h) Supervising the operations of the local councils and
719 monitoring the performance and activities of all local councils
720 and providing technical assistance to members of local councils.

721 (i) Providing for the development and presentation of a
 722 standardized training program for members of local councils.

723 (j) Developing and maintaining interagency agreements
 724 between the council and the state agencies providing client
 725 services. The interagency agreements shall address the
 726 coordination of efforts and identify the roles and
 727 responsibilities of the statewide and local councils and each
 728 agency in fulfillment of their responsibilities, including
 729 access to records. The interagency agreements shall explicitly
 730 define a process that the statewide and local councils shall use
 731 to request records from the agency and shall define a process
 732 for appeal when disputes about access to records arise between
 733 staff and council members. Interagency agreements shall be
 734 renewed annually and shall be completed and reported to the
 735 Governor no later than February 1.

736 Section 9. Section 409.1451, Florida Statutes, is amended
 737 to read:

738 409.1451 Independent living transition services.--

739 (1) SYSTEM OF SERVICES.--

740 (a) The Department of Children and Family Services, its
 741 agents, or community-based providers operating pursuant to s.
 742 409.1671 shall administer a system of independent living
 743 transition services to enable older children in foster care and
 744 young adults who exit foster care at age 18 to make the
 745 transition to self-sufficiency as adults.

746 (b) The goals of independent living transition services
 747 are to assist older children in foster care and young adults who
 748 were formerly in foster care to obtain life skills and education

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749 for independent living and employment, to have a quality of life
750 appropriate for their age, and to assume personal responsibility
751 for becoming self-sufficient adults.

752 (c) State funds for foster care or federal funds shall be
753 used to establish a continuum of services for eligible children
754 in foster care and eligible young adults who were formerly in
755 foster care which accomplish the goals for the system of
756 independent living transition services by providing services for
757 foster children, pursuant to subsection (4), and services for
758 young adults who were formerly in foster care, pursuant to
759 subsection (5).

760 (d) For children in foster care, independent living
761 transition services are not an alternative to adoption.
762 Independent living transition services may occur concurrently
763 with continued efforts to locate and achieve placement in
764 adoptive families for older children in foster care.

765 (2) ELIGIBILITY.--

766 (a) The department shall serve children who have reached
767 13 years of age but are not yet 18 years of age and who are in
768 foster care by providing services pursuant to subsection (4).
769 Children to be served must meet the eligibility requirements set
770 forth for specific services as provided in this section.

771 (b) The department shall serve young adults who have
772 reached 18 years of age or were placed with a court-approved
773 nonrelative or guardian after reaching 16 years of age and have
774 spent a minimum of 6 months in foster care ~~but are not yet 23~~
775 ~~years of age and who were in foster care when they turned 18~~
776 ~~years of age~~ by providing services pursuant to subsection (5).

777 Young adults are not entitled to be served but must meet the
 778 eligibility requirements set forth for specific services in this
 779 section.

780 (3) PREPARATION FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING.--

781 (a) It is the intent of the Legislature for the Department
 782 of Children and Family Services to assist older children in
 783 foster care and young adults who exit foster care at age 18 in
 784 making the transition to independent living and self-sufficiency
 785 as adults. The department shall provide such children and young
 786 adults with opportunities to participate in life skills
 787 activities in their foster families and communities which are
 788 reasonable and appropriate for their respective ages or for any
 789 special needs they may have, and shall provide them with
 790 services to build life ~~the~~ skills and increase their ability to
 791 live independently and become self-sufficient. To support the
 792 provision of opportunities for participation in age-appropriate
 793 life skills activities, the department shall:

794 1. Develop a list of age-appropriate activities and
 795 responsibilities to be offered to all children involved in
 796 independent living transition services and their foster parents.

797 2. Provide training for staff and foster parents to
 798 address the issues of older children in foster care in
 799 transitioning to adulthood, which shall include information on
 800 high school completion, grant applications, vocational school
 801 opportunities, supporting education and employment
 802 opportunities, and ~~providing~~ opportunities to participate in
 803 appropriate daily activities.

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804 3. Develop procedures to maximize the authority of foster
805 parents or caregivers to approve participation in age-
806 appropriate activities of children in their care. The age-
807 appropriate activities and the authority of the foster parent or
808 caregiver shall be developed into a written plan that the foster
809 parent or caregiver, the child, and the case manager all develop
810 together, sign, and follow. This plan must include specific
811 goals and objectives and be reviewed and updated no less than
812 quarterly.

813 4. Provide opportunities for older children in foster care
814 to interact with mentors.

815 5. Develop and implement procedures for older children to
816 directly access and manage the personal allowance they receive
817 from the department in order to learn responsibility and
818 participate in age-appropriate life skills activities to the
819 extent feasible.

820 6. Make a good faith effort to fully explain, prior to
821 execution of any signature, if required, any document, report,
822 form, or other record, whether written or electronic, presented
823 to a child or young adult pursuant to this chapter and allow for
824 the recipient to ask any appropriate questions necessary to
825 fully understand the document. It shall be the responsibility of
826 the person presenting the document to the child or young adult
827 to comply with this subparagraph.

828 (b) It is further the intent of the Legislature that each
829 child in foster care, his or her foster parents, if applicable,
830 and the department or community-based provider set early
831 achievement and career goals for the child's postsecondary

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832 educational and work experience. The department and community-
833 based providers shall implement the model set forth in this
834 paragraph to help ensure that children in foster care are ready
835 for postsecondary education and the workplace.

836 1. For children in foster care who have reached 13 years
837 of age, entering the 9th grade, their foster parents, and the
838 department or community-based provider shall ensure that the
839 child's case plan includes an educational and career path ~~be~~
840 ~~active participants in choosing a post high school goal~~ based
841 upon both the abilities and interests of each child. The child,
842 the foster parents, and a teacher or other school staff member
843 shall be included to the fullest extent possible in developing
844 the path. The path shall be reviewed at each judicial hearing as
845 part of the case plan and ~~goal~~ shall accommodate the needs of
846 children served in exceptional education programs to the extent
847 appropriate for each individual. Such children may continue to
848 follow the courses outlined in the district school board student
849 progression plan. Children in foster care, with the assistance
850 of their foster parents, and the department or community-based
851 provider shall choose one of the following postsecondary goals:
852 a. Attending a 4-year college or university, a community
853 college plus university, or a military academy;
854 b. Receiving a 2-year postsecondary degree;
855 c. Attaining a postsecondary career and technical
856 certificate or credential; or
857 d. Beginning immediate employment, including
858 apprenticeship, after completion of a high school diploma or its
859 equivalent, or enlisting in the military.

860 2. In order to assist the child in foster care in
 861 achieving his or her chosen goal, the department or community-
 862 based provider shall, with the participation of the child and
 863 foster parents, identify:

864 a. The core courses necessary to qualify for a chosen
 865 goal.

866 b. Any elective courses which would provide additional
 867 help in reaching a chosen goal.

868 c. The grade point requirement and any additional
 869 information necessary to achieve a specific goal.

870 d. A teacher, other school staff member, employee of the
 871 department or community-based care provider, or community
 872 volunteer who would be willing to work with the child as an
 873 academic advocate or mentor if foster parent involvement is
 874 insufficient or unavailable.

875 3. In order to complement educational goals, the
 876 department and community-based providers are encouraged to form
 877 partnerships with the business community to support internships,
 878 apprenticeships, or other work-related opportunities.

879 4. The department and community-based providers shall
 880 ensure that children in foster care and their foster parents are
 881 made aware of the postsecondary goals available and shall assist
 882 in identifying the coursework necessary to enable the child to
 883 reach the chosen goal.

884 (c) All children in foster care and young adults formerly
 885 in foster care are encouraged to take part in learning
 886 opportunities that result from participation in community
 887 service activities.

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888 (d) Children in foster care and young adults formerly in
889 foster care shall be provided with the opportunity to change
890 from one postsecondary goal to another, and each postsecondary
891 goal shall allow for changes in each individual's needs and
892 preferences. Any change, particularly a change that will result
893 in additional time required to achieve a goal, shall be made
894 with the guidance and assistance of the department or community-
895 based provider.

896 (4) SERVICES FOR CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE.--The department
897 shall provide the following transition to independence services
898 to children in foster care who meet prescribed conditions and
899 are determined eligible by the department. The service
900 categories available to children in foster care which facilitate
901 successful transition into adulthood are:

902 (a) Preindependent living services.--

903 1. Preindependent living services include, but are not
904 limited to, life skills training, educational field trips, and
905 conferences. The specific services to be provided to a child
906 shall be determined using a preindependent living assessment.

907 2. A child who has reached 13 years of age but is not yet
908 15 years of age who is in foster care is eligible for such
909 services.

910 3. The department shall conduct an annual staffing for
911 each child who has reached 13 years of age but is not yet 15
912 years of age to ensure that the preindependent living training
913 and services to be provided as determined by the preindependent
914 living assessment are being received and to evaluate the

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915 progress of the child in developing the needed independent
916 living skills.

917 4. At the first annual staffing that occurs following a
918 child's 14th birthday, and at each subsequent staffing, the
919 department or community-based provider shall ensure that the
920 child's case plan includes an educational and career path based
921 upon both the abilities and interests of each child and shall
922 provide to each child detailed personalized information on
923 services provided by the Road-to-Independence ~~Scholarship~~
924 Program, including requirements for eligibility; on other
925 grants, scholarships, and waivers that are available and should
926 be sought by the child with assistance from the department,
927 including, but not limited to, the Bright Futures Scholarship
928 Program, as provided in ss. 1009.53-1009.538; on application
929 deadlines; and on grade requirements for such programs.

930 5. Information related to both the preindependent living
931 assessment and all staffings, which shall be reduced to writing
932 and signed by the child participant, shall be included as a part
933 of the written report required to be provided to the court at
934 each judicial review held pursuant to s. 39.701.

935 (b) Life skills services.--

936 1. Life skills services may include, but are not limited
937 to, independent living skills training, including training to
938 develop banking and budgeting skills, interviewing skills,
939 parenting skills, and time management or organizational skills,
940 educational support, employment training, and counseling.

941 Children receiving these services should also be provided with
942 information related to social security insurance benefits and

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943 public assistance. The specific services to be provided to a
944 child shall be determined using an independent life skills
945 assessment.

946 2. A child who has reached 15 years of age but is not yet
947 18 years of age who is in foster care is eligible for such
948 services.

949 3. The department shall conduct a staffing at least once
950 every 6 months for each child who has reached 15 years of age
951 but is not yet 18 years of age to ensure that the appropriate
952 independent living training and services as determined by the
953 independent life skills assessment are being received and to
954 evaluate the progress of the child in developing the needed
955 independent living skills.

956 4. The department shall provide to each child in foster
957 care during the calendar month following the child's 17th
958 birthday an independent living assessment to determine the
959 child's skills and abilities to live independently and become
960 self-sufficient. Based on the results of the independent living
961 assessment, services and training shall be provided in order for
962 the child to develop the necessary skills and abilities prior to
963 the child's 18th birthday.

964 5. Information related to both the independent life skills
965 assessment and all staffings, which shall be reduced to writing
966 and signed by the child participant, shall be included as a part
967 of the written report required to be provided to the court at
968 each judicial review held pursuant to s. 39.701.

969 (c) Subsidized independent living services.--

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970 1. Subsidized independent living services are living
971 arrangements that allow the child to live independently of the
972 daily care and supervision of an adult in a setting that is not
973 required to be licensed under s. 409.175.

974 2. A child who has reached 16 years of age but is not yet
975 18 years of age is eligible for such services if he or she:

976 a. Is adjudicated dependent under chapter 39; has been
977 placed in licensed out-of-home care for at least 6 months prior
978 to entering subsidized independent living; and has a permanency
979 goal of adoption, independent living, or long-term licensed
980 care; and

981 b. Is able to demonstrate independent living skills, as
982 determined by the department, using established procedures and
983 assessments.

984 3. Independent living arrangements established for a child
985 must be part of an overall plan leading to the total
986 independence of the child from the department's supervision. The
987 plan must include, but need not be limited to, a description of
988 the skills of the child and a plan for learning additional
989 identified skills; the behavior that the child has exhibited
990 which indicates an ability to be responsible and a plan for
991 developing additional responsibilities, as appropriate; a plan
992 for future educational, vocational, and training skills; present
993 financial and budgeting capabilities and a plan for improving
994 resources and ability; a description of the proposed residence;
995 documentation that the child understands the specific
996 consequences of his or her conduct in the independent living
997 program; documentation of proposed services to be provided by

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998 the department and other agencies, including the type of service
 999 and the nature and frequency of contact; and a plan for
 1000 maintaining or developing relationships with the family, other
 1001 adults, friends, and the community, as appropriate.

1002 4. Subsidy payments in an amount established by the
 1003 department may be made directly to a child under the direct
 1004 supervision of a caseworker or other responsible adult approved
 1005 by the department.

1006 (5) SERVICES FOR YOUNG ADULTS FORMERLY IN FOSTER
 1007 CARE.--Based on the availability of funds, the department shall
 1008 provide or arrange for the following services to young adults
 1009 formerly in foster care who meet the prescribed conditions and
 1010 are determined eligible by the department. The department, or a
 1011 community-based care lead agency when the agency is under
 1012 contract with the department to provide the services described
 1013 under this subsection, shall develop a plan to implement those
 1014 services. A plan shall be developed for each community-based
 1015 care service area in the state. Each plan that is developed by a
 1016 community-based care lead agency shall be submitted to the
 1017 department. Each plan shall include the number of young adults
 1018 to be served each month of the fiscal year and specify the
 1019 number of young adults who will reach 18 years of age who will
 1020 be eligible for the plan and the number of young adults who will
 1021 reach 23 years of age and will be ineligible for the plan or who
 1022 are otherwise ineligible during each month of the fiscal year;
 1023 staffing requirements and all related costs to administer the
 1024 services and program; expenditures to or on behalf of the
 1025 eligible recipients; costs of services provided to young adults

1026 through an approved plan for housing, transportation, and
 1027 employment; reconciliation of these expenses and any additional
 1028 related costs with the funds allocated for these services; and
 1029 an explanation of and a plan to resolve any shortages or
 1030 surpluses in order to end the fiscal year with a balanced
 1031 budget. The categories of services available to assist a young
 1032 adult formerly in foster care to achieve independence are:

1033 (a) Aftercare support services.--

1034 1. Aftercare support services are available to assist
 1035 young adults who were formerly in foster care in their efforts
 1036 to continue to develop the skills and abilities necessary for
 1037 independent living. The aftercare support services available
 1038 include, but are not limited to, the following:

- 1039 a. Mentoring and tutoring.
- 1040 b. Mental health services and substance abuse counseling.
- 1041 c. Life skills classes, including credit management and
- 1042 preventive health activities.
- 1043 d. Parenting classes.
- 1044 e. Job and career skills training.
- 1045 f. Counselor consultations.
- 1046 g. Temporary financial assistance.
- 1047 h. Financial literacy skills training.

1048
 1049 The specific services to be provided under this subparagraph
 1050 shall be determined by an aftercare services assessment and may
 1051 be provided by the department or through referrals in the
 1052 community.

1053 2. Temporary assistance provided to prevent homelessness
 1054 shall be provided as expeditiously as possible and within the
 1055 limitations defined by the department.

1056 ~~3.2.~~ A young adult who has reached 18 years of age but is
 1057 not yet 23 years of age who leaves foster care at 18 years of
 1058 age but who requests services prior to reaching 23 years of age
 1059 is eligible for such services.

1060 (b) Road-to-Independence ~~Scholarship~~ Program.--

1061 1. The Road-to-Independence ~~Scholarship~~ Program is
 1062 intended to help eligible students who are former foster
 1063 children in this state to receive the educational and vocational
 1064 training needed to achieve independence. The amount of the award
 1065 shall be based on the living and educational needs of the young
 1066 adult and may be up to, but may not exceed, the amount of
 1067 earnings that the student would have been eligible to earn
 1068 working a 40-hour-a-week federal minimum wage job.

1069 2. A young adult who has reached 18 years of age but is
 1070 not yet 21 years of age is eligible for the initial award, and a
 1071 young adult under 23 years of age is eligible for renewal
 1072 awards, if he or she:

1073 a. Was a dependent child, under chapter 39, and was living
 1074 in licensed foster care or in subsidized independent living at
 1075 the time of his or her 18th birthday or is currently in licensed
 1076 foster care or subsidized independent living, was adopted from
 1077 foster care after reaching 16 years of age, or, after spending
 1078 at least 6 months in the custody of the department after
 1079 reaching 16 years of age, was placed in a guardianship by the
 1080 court;

1081 b. Spent at least 6 months living in foster care before
 1082 reaching his or her 18th birthday;

1083 c. Is a resident of this state as defined in s. 1009.40;
 1084 and

1085 d. Meets one of the following qualifications:

1086 (I) Has earned a standard high school diploma or its
 1087 equivalent as described in s. 1003.43 or s. 1003.435, or has
 1088 earned a special diploma or special certificate of completion as
 1089 described in s. 1003.438, and has been admitted for full-time
 1090 enrollment in an eligible postsecondary education institution as
 1091 defined in s. 1009.533;

1092 (II) Is enrolled full time in an accredited high school;
 1093 or

1094 (III) Is enrolled full time in an accredited adult
 1095 education program designed to provide the student with a high
 1096 school diploma or its equivalent.

1097 3. A young adult applying for the ~~a~~ Road-to-Independence
 1098 Program Scholarship must apply for any other grants and
 1099 scholarships for which he or she may qualify. The department
 1100 shall assist the young adult in the application process and may
 1101 use the federal financial aid grant process to determine the
 1102 funding needs of the young adult.

1103 4. An award shall be available to a young adult who is
 1104 considered a full-time student or its equivalent by the
 1105 educational institution in which he or she is enrolled, unless
 1106 that young adult has a recognized disability preventing full-
 1107 time attendance. The amount of the award, whether it is being
 1108 used by a young adult working toward completion of a high school

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1109 diploma or its equivalent or working toward completion of a
1110 postsecondary education program, shall be determined based on an
1111 assessment of the funding needs of the young adult. This
1112 assessment must consider the young adult's living and
1113 educational costs and other grants, scholarships, waivers,
1114 earnings, and other income to be received by the young adult. An
1115 award shall be available only to the extent that other grants
1116 and scholarships are not sufficient to meet the living and
1117 educational needs of the young adult, but an award may not be
1118 less than \$25 in order to maintain Medicaid eligibility for the
1119 young adult as provided in s. 409.903.

1120 5.a. The department must advertise the criteria,
1121 application procedures, and availability of the program to:

1122 (I) Children and young adults in, leaving, or formerly in
1123 foster care.

1124 (II) Case managers.

1125 (III) Guidance and family services counselors.

1126 (IV) Principals or other relevant school administrators
1127 ~~and must ensure that the children and young adults leaving~~
1128 ~~foster care, foster parents, or family services counselors are~~
1129 ~~informed of the availability of the program and the application~~
1130 ~~procedures.~~

1131 b. A young adult must apply for the initial award during
1132 the 6 months immediately preceding his or her 18th birthday, and
1133 the department shall provide assistance with the application
1134 process. A young adult who fails to make an initial application,
1135 but who otherwise meets the criteria for an initial award, may
1136 make one application for the initial award if the application is

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1137 made before the young adult's 21st birthday. If the young adult
1138 does not apply for an initial award before his or her 18th
1139 birthday, the department shall inform that young adult of the
1140 opportunity to apply before turning 21 years of age.

1141 c. ~~If funding for the program is available,~~ The department
1142 shall issue awards from the ~~scholarship~~ program for each young
1143 adult who meets all the requirements of the program to the
1144 extent funding is available.

1145 d. An award shall be issued at the time the eligible
1146 student reaches 18 years of age.

1147 e. A young adult who is eligible for the Road-to-
1148 Independence Program, transitional support services, or
1149 aftercare services and who so desires shall be allowed to reside
1150 with the licensed foster family or group care provider with whom
1151 he or she was residing at the time of attaining his or her 18th
1152 birthday or to reside in another licensed foster home or with a
1153 group care provider arranged by the department.

1154 f. If the award recipient transfers from one eligible
1155 institution to another and continues to meet eligibility
1156 requirements, the award must be transferred with the recipient.

1157 g. ~~Scholarship~~ Funds awarded to any eligible young adult
1158 under this program are in addition to any other services or
1159 funds provided to the young adult by the department through
1160 transitional support services or aftercare services ~~its~~
1161 ~~independent living transition services.~~

1162 h. The department shall provide information concerning
1163 young adults receiving funding through the Road-to-Independence
1164 Program ~~Scholarship~~ to the Department of Education for inclusion

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1165 in the student financial assistance database, as provided in s.
1166 1009.94.

1167 i. ~~Scholarship~~ Funds are intended to help eligible young
1168 adults ~~students~~ who are former foster children in this state to
1169 receive the educational and vocational training needed to become
1170 independent and self-supporting. The funds shall be terminated
1171 when the young adult has attained one of four postsecondary
1172 goals under subsection (3) or reaches 23 years of age, whichever
1173 occurs earlier. In order to initiate postsecondary education, to
1174 allow for a change in career goal, or to obtain additional
1175 skills in the same educational or vocational area, a young adult
1176 may earn no more than two diplomas, certificates, or
1177 credentials. A young adult attaining an associate of arts or
1178 associate of science degree shall be permitted to work toward
1179 completion of a bachelor of arts or a bachelor of science degree
1180 or an equivalent undergraduate degree. Road-to-Independence
1181 Program ~~Scholarship~~ funds may not be used for education or
1182 training after a young adult has attained a bachelor of arts or
1183 a bachelor of science degree or an equivalent undergraduate
1184 degree.

1185 j. The department shall evaluate and renew each award
1186 annually during the 90-day period before the young adult's
1187 birthday. In order to be eligible for a renewal award for the
1188 subsequent year, the young adult must:

1189 (I) Complete the number of hours, or the equivalent
1190 considered full time by the educational institution, unless that
1191 young adult has a recognized disability preventing full-time
1192 attendance, in the last academic year in which the young adult

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1193 earned an award ~~a scholarship~~, except for a young adult who
 1194 meets the requirements of s. 1009.41.

1195 (II) Maintain appropriate progress as required by the
 1196 educational institution, except that, if the young adult's
 1197 progress is insufficient to renew the award ~~scholarship~~ at any
 1198 time during the eligibility period, the young adult may restore
 1199 eligibility by improving his or her progress to the required
 1200 level.

1201 k. ~~Scholarship~~ Funds may be terminated during the interim
 1202 between an award and the evaluation for a renewal award if the
 1203 department determines that the award recipient is no longer
 1204 enrolled in an educational institution as defined in sub-
 1205 subparagraph 2.d., or is no longer a state resident. The
 1206 department shall notify a recipient ~~student~~ who is terminated
 1207 and inform the recipient ~~student~~ of his or her right to appeal.

1208 1. An award recipient who does not qualify for a renewal
 1209 award or who chooses not to renew the award may subsequently
 1210 apply for reinstatement. An application for reinstatement must
 1211 be made before the young adult reaches 21 ~~23~~ years of age, and a
 1212 student may not apply for reinstatement more than once. In order
 1213 to be eligible for reinstatement, the young adult must meet the
 1214 eligibility criteria and the criteria for award renewal for the
 1215 ~~scholarship~~ program.

1216 (c) Transitional support services.--

1217 1. In addition to any services provided through aftercare
 1218 support or the Road-to-Independence Program ~~Scholarship~~, a young
 1219 adult formerly in foster care may receive other appropriate
 1220 short-term funding and services, which may include financial,

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1221 housing, counseling, employment, education, mental health,
1222 disability, and other services, if the young adult demonstrates
1223 that the services are critical to the young adult's own efforts
1224 to achieve self-sufficiency and to develop a personal support
1225 system. The department or community-based care provider shall
1226 work with the young adult in developing a joint transition plan
1227 that is consistent with a needs assessment identifying the
1228 specific need for transitional services to support the young
1229 adult's own efforts. The young adult must have specific tasks to
1230 complete or maintain included in the plan and be accountable for
1231 the completion of or making progress towards the completion of
1232 these tasks. If the young adult and the department or community-
1233 based care provider cannot come to agreement regarding any part
1234 of the plan, the young adult may access a grievance process to
1235 its full extent in an effort to resolve the disagreement.

1236 2. A young adult formerly in foster care is eligible to
1237 apply for transitional support services if he or she has reached
1238 18 years of age but is not yet 23 years of age, was a dependent
1239 child pursuant to chapter 39, was living in licensed foster care
1240 or in subsidized independent living at the time of his or her
1241 18th birthday, and had spent at least 6 months living in foster
1242 care before that date.

1243 3. If at any time the services are no longer critical to
1244 the young adult's own efforts to achieve self-sufficiency and to
1245 develop a personal support system, they shall be terminated.

1246 (d) Payment of aftercare, Road-to-Independence Program
1247 scholarship, or transitional support funds.--

1248 1. Payment of aftercare, Road-to-Independence Program
 1249 ~~scholarship~~, or transitional support funds shall be made
 1250 directly to the recipient unless the recipient requests in
 1251 writing to the community-based care lead agency, or the
 1252 department, that the payments or a portion of the payments be
 1253 made directly on the recipient's behalf in order to secure
 1254 services such as housing, counseling, education, or employment
 1255 training as part of the young adult's own efforts to achieve
 1256 self-sufficiency.

1257 2. After the completion of aftercare support services that
 1258 satisfy the requirements of sub-subparagraph (a)1.h., payment of
 1259 awards under the Road-to-Independence Program shall be made by
 1260 direct deposit to the recipient, unless the recipient requests
 1261 in writing to the community-based care lead agency or the
 1262 department that:

1263 a. The payments be made directly to the recipient by check
 1264 or warrant;

1265 b. The payments or a portion of the payments be made
 1266 directly on the recipient's behalf to institutions the recipient
 1267 is attending to maintain eligibility under this section; or

1268 c. The payments be made on a two-party check to a business
 1269 or landlord for a legitimate expense, whether reimbursed or not.
 1270 A legitimate expense for the purposes of this sub-subparagraph
 1271 shall include automobile repair or maintenance expenses;
 1272 educational, job, or training expenses; and costs incurred,
 1273 except legal costs, fines, or penalties, when applying for or
 1274 executing a rental agreement for the purposes of securing a home
 1275 or residence.

1276 3. The community-based care lead agency may purchase
 1277 housing, transportation, or employment services to ensure the
 1278 availability and affordability of specific transitional services
 1279 thereby allowing an eligible young adult to utilize these
 1280 services in lieu of receiving a direct payment. Prior to
 1281 purchasing such services, the community-based care lead agency
 1282 must have a plan approved by the department describing the
 1283 services to be purchased, the rationale for purchasing the
 1284 services, and a specific range of expenses for each service that
 1285 is less than the cost of purchasing the service by an individual
 1286 young adult. The plan must include a description of the
 1287 transition of a young adult using these services into
 1288 independence and a timeframe for achievement of independence. An
 1289 eligible young adult who can demonstrate an ability to obtain
 1290 these services independently and prefers a direct payment shall
 1291 receive such payment. The plan must be reviewed annually and
 1292 evaluated for cost-efficiency and for effectiveness in assisting
 1293 young adults in achieving independence, preventing homelessness
 1294 among young adults, and enabling young adults to earn a livable
 1295 wage in a permanent employment situation.

1296 4. The young adult who resides with a foster family may
 1297 not be included as a child in calculating any licensing
 1298 restriction on the number of children in the foster home.

1299 (e) Appeals process.--

1300 1. The Department of Children and Family Services shall
 1301 adopt by rule a procedure by which a young adult may appeal an
 1302 eligibility determination or the department's failure to provide
 1303 aftercare, Road-to-Independence Program ~~scholarship~~, or

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1304 transitional support services, or the termination of such
 1305 services, if such funds are available.

1306 2. The procedure developed by the department must be
 1307 readily available to young adults, must provide timely
 1308 decisions, and must provide for an appeal to the Secretary of
 1309 Children and Family Services. The decision of the secretary
 1310 constitutes final agency action and is reviewable by the court
 1311 as provided in s. 120.68.

1312 (6) ACCOUNTABILITY.--The department shall develop outcome
 1313 measures for the program and other performance measures.

1314 (7) INDEPENDENT LIVING SERVICES ADVISORY COUNCIL.--The
 1315 Secretary of Children and Family Services shall establish the
 1316 Independent Living Services Advisory Council for the purpose of
 1317 reviewing and making recommendations concerning the
 1318 implementation and operation of the independent living
 1319 transition services. This advisory council shall continue to
 1320 function as specified in this subsection until the Legislature
 1321 determines that the advisory council can no longer provide a
 1322 valuable contribution to the department's efforts to achieve the
 1323 goals of the independent living transition services.

1324 (a) Specifically, the advisory council shall assess the
 1325 implementation and operation of the system of independent living
 1326 transition services and advise the department on actions that
 1327 would improve the ability of the independent living transition
 1328 services to meet the established goals. The advisory council
 1329 shall keep the department informed of problems being experienced
 1330 with the services, barriers to the effective and efficient
 1331 integration of services and support across systems, and

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1332 successes that the system of independent living transition
 1333 services has achieved. The department shall consider, but is not
 1334 required to implement, the recommendations of the advisory
 1335 council.

1336 (b) The advisory council shall report to the appropriate
 1337 substantive committees of the Senate and the House of
 1338 Representatives on the status of the implementation of the
 1339 system of independent living transition services; efforts to
 1340 publicize the availability of aftercare support services, the
 1341 Road-to-Independence ~~Scholarship~~ Program, and transitional
 1342 support services; ~~specific barriers to financial aid created by~~
 1343 ~~the scholarship and possible solutions;~~ the success of the
 1344 services; problems identified; recommendations for department or
 1345 legislative action; and the department's implementation of the
 1346 recommendations contained in the Independent Living Services
 1347 Integration Workgroup Report submitted to the Senate and the
 1348 House substantive committees December 31, 2002. This advisory
 1349 council report shall be submitted by December 31 of each year
 1350 that the council is in existence and shall be accompanied by a
 1351 report from the department which identifies the recommendations
 1352 of the advisory council and either describes the department's
 1353 actions to implement these recommendations or provides the
 1354 department's rationale for not implementing the recommendations.

1355 (c) Members of the advisory council shall be appointed by
 1356 the secretary of the department. The membership of the advisory
 1357 council must include, at a minimum, representatives from the
 1358 headquarters and district offices of the Department of Children
 1359 and Family Services, community-based care lead agencies, the

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1360 Agency for Workforce Innovation, the Department of Education,
 1361 the Agency for Health Care Administration, the State Youth
 1362 Advisory Board, Workforce Florida, Inc., the Statewide Guardian
 1363 Ad Litem Office, foster parents, recipients of Road-to-
 1364 Independence Program funding, and advocates for foster children.
 1365 The secretary shall determine the length of the term to be
 1366 served by each member appointed to the advisory council, which
 1367 may not exceed 4 years.

1368 (d) The Department of Children and Family Services shall
 1369 provide administrative support to the Independent Living
 1370 Services Advisory Council to accomplish its assigned tasks. The
 1371 advisory council shall be afforded access to all appropriate
 1372 data from the department, each community-based care lead agency,
 1373 and other relevant agencies in order to accomplish the tasks set
 1374 forth in this section. The data collected may not include any
 1375 information that would identify a specific child or young adult.

1376 (8) PERSONAL PROPERTY.--Property acquired on behalf of
 1377 clients of this program shall become the personal property of
 1378 the clients and is not subject to the requirements of chapter
 1379 273 relating to state-owned tangible personal property. Such
 1380 property continues to be subject to applicable federal laws.

1381 (9) MEDICAL ASSISTANCE FOR YOUNG ADULTS FORMERLY IN FOSTER
 1382 CARE.--The department shall enroll in the Florida KidCare
 1383 program, outside the open enrollment period, each young adult
 1384 who is eligible as described in paragraph (2) (b) and who has not
 1385 yet reached his or her 20th ~~19th~~ birthday.

1386 (a) A young adult who was formerly in foster care at the
 1387 time of his or her 18th birthday and who is 18 years of age but

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1388 not yet 20 ~~19~~, shall pay the premium for the Florida KidCare
 1389 program as required in s. 409.814.

1390 (b) A young adult who has health insurance coverage from a
 1391 third party through his or her employer or who is eligible for
 1392 Medicaid is not eligible for enrollment under this subsection.

1393 (10) RULEMAKING.--The department shall adopt by rule
 1394 procedures to administer this section, including balancing the
 1395 goals of normalcy and safety for the youth and providing the
 1396 caregivers with as much flexibility as possible to enable the
 1397 youth to participate in normal life experiences. The department
 1398 shall not adopt rules relating to reductions in ~~scholarship~~
 1399 awards. The department shall engage in appropriate planning to
 1400 prevent, to the extent possible, a reduction in ~~scholarship~~
 1401 awards after issuance.

1402 Section 10. Paragraph (b) of subsection (2) of section
 1403 409.175, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

1404 409.175 Licensure of family foster homes, residential
 1405 child-caring agencies, and child-placing agencies; public
 1406 records exemption.--

1407 (2) As used in this section, the term:

1408 (b) "Boarding school" means a school which is accredited
 1409 by the Florida Council of Independent Schools or the Southern
 1410 Association of Colleges and Schools; which is accredited by the
 1411 Council on Accreditation, the Commission on Accreditation of
 1412 Rehabilitation Facilities, or the Coalition for Residential
 1413 Education; and which is registered with the Department of
 1414 Education as a school. Its program must follow established
 1415 school schedules, with holiday breaks and summer recesses in

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1416 accordance with other public and private school programs. The
 1417 children in residence must customarily return to their family
 1418 homes or legal guardians during school breaks and must not be in
 1419 residence year-round, except that this provision does not apply
 1420 to foreign students. The parents of these children retain
 1421 custody and planning and financial responsibility. A boarding
 1422 school currently in existence and a boarding school opening and
 1423 seeking accreditation has 3 years to comply with the
 1424 requirements of this paragraph. A boarding school must provide
 1425 proof of accreditation or documentation of the accreditation
 1426 process upon request. A boarding school that cannot produce the
 1427 required documentation or that has not registered with the
 1428 Department of Education shall be considered to be providing
 1429 residential group care without a license. The department may
 1430 impose administrative sanctions or seek civil remedies as
 1431 provided under paragraph (11) (a).

1432 Section 11. Subsection (2) of section 39.013, Florida
 1433 Statutes, is amended to read:

1434 39.013 Procedures and jurisdiction; right to counsel.--

1435 (2) The circuit court shall have exclusive original
 1436 jurisdiction of all proceedings under this chapter, of a child
 1437 voluntarily placed with a licensed child-caring agency, a
 1438 licensed child-placing agency, or the department, and of the
 1439 adoption of children whose parental rights have been terminated
 1440 under this chapter. Jurisdiction attaches when the initial
 1441 shelter petition, dependency petition, or termination of
 1442 parental rights petition is filed or when a child is taken into
 1443 the custody of the department. The circuit court may assume

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1444 jurisdiction over any such proceeding regardless of whether the
1445 child was in the physical custody of both parents, was in the
1446 sole legal or physical custody of only one parent, caregiver, or
1447 some other person, or was in the physical or legal custody of no
1448 person when the event or condition occurred that brought the
1449 child to the attention of the court. When the court obtains
1450 jurisdiction of any child who has been found to be dependent,
1451 the court shall retain jurisdiction, unless relinquished by its
1452 order, until the child reaches 18 years of age. However, if a
1453 youth petitions the court at any time before his or her 19th
1454 birthday requesting the court's continued jurisdiction, the
1455 juvenile court may retain jurisdiction under this chapter for a
1456 period not to exceed 1 year following the youth's 18th birthday
1457 for the purpose of determining whether appropriate aftercare
1458 support, Road-to-Independence Program Scholarship, transitional
1459 support, mental health, and developmental disability services,
1460 to the extent otherwise authorized by law, have been provided to
1461 the formerly dependent child who was in the legal custody of the
1462 department immediately before his or her 18th birthday. If a
1463 petition for special immigrant juvenile status and an
1464 application for adjustment of status have been filed on behalf
1465 of a foster child and the petition and application have not been
1466 granted by the time the child reaches 18 years of age, the court
1467 may retain jurisdiction over the dependency case solely for the
1468 purpose of allowing the continued consideration of the petition
1469 and application by federal authorities. Review hearings for the
1470 child shall be set solely for the purpose of determining the
1471 status of the petition and application. The court's jurisdiction

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CODING: Words ~~stricken~~ are deletions; words underlined are additions.

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1472 terminates upon the final decision of the federal authorities.
 1473 Retention of jurisdiction in this instance does not affect the
 1474 services available to a young adult under s. 409.1451. The court
 1475 may not retain jurisdiction of the case after the immigrant
 1476 child's 22nd birthday.

1477 Section 12. Paragraph (a) of subsection (6) of section
 1478 39.701, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

1479 39.701 Judicial review.--

1480 (6) (a) In addition to paragraphs (1) (a) and (2) (a), the
 1481 court shall hold a judicial review hearing within 90 days after
 1482 a youth's 17th birthday and shall continue to hold timely
 1483 judicial review hearings. In addition, the court may review the
 1484 status of the child more frequently during the year prior to the
 1485 youth's 18th birthday if necessary. At each review held under
 1486 this subsection, in addition to any information or report
 1487 provided to the court, the foster parent, legal custodian,
 1488 guardian ad litem, and the child shall be given the opportunity
 1489 to address the court with any information relevant to the
 1490 child's best interests, particularly as it relates to
 1491 independent living transition services. In addition to any
 1492 information or report provided to the court, the department
 1493 shall include in its judicial review social study report written
 1494 verification that the child:

1495 1. Has been provided with a current Medicaid card and has
 1496 been provided all necessary information concerning the Medicaid
 1497 program sufficient to prepare the youth to apply for coverage
 1498 upon reaching age 18, if such application would be appropriate.

1499 2. Has been provided with a certified copy of his or her
 1500 birth certificate and, if the child does not have a valid
 1501 driver's license, a Florida identification card issued under s.
 1502 322.051.

1503 3. Has been provided information relating to Social
 1504 Security Insurance benefits if the child is eligible for these
 1505 benefits. If the child has received these benefits and they are
 1506 being held in trust for the child, a full accounting of those
 1507 funds must be provided and the child must be informed about how
 1508 to access those funds.

1509 4. Has been provided with information and training related
 1510 to budgeting skills, interviewing skills, and parenting skills.

1511 5. Has been provided with all relevant information related
 1512 to the Road-to-Independence Program ~~Scholarship~~, including, but
 1513 not limited to, eligibility requirements, forms necessary to
 1514 apply, and assistance in completing the forms. The child shall
 1515 also be informed that, if he or she is eligible for the Road-to-
 1516 Independence ~~Scholarship~~ Program, he or she may reside with the
 1517 licensed foster family or group care provider with whom the
 1518 child was residing at the time of attaining his or her 18th
 1519 birthday or may reside in another licensed foster home or with a
 1520 group care provider arranged by the department.

1521 6. Has an open bank account, or has identification
 1522 necessary to open an account, and has been provided with
 1523 essential banking skills.

1524 7. Has been provided with information on public assistance
 1525 and how to apply.

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1526 8. Has been provided a clear understanding of where he or
1527 she will be living on his or her 18th birthday, how living
1528 expenses will be paid, and what educational program or school he
1529 or she will be enrolled in.

1530 9. Has been provided with notice of the youth's right to
1531 petition for the court's continuing jurisdiction for 1 year
1532 after the youth's 18th birthday as specified in s. 39.013(2) and
1533 with information on how to obtain access to the court.

1534 10. Has been encouraged to attend all judicial review
1535 hearings occurring after his or her 17th birthday.

1536 Section 13. Paragraph (c) of subsection (2) of section
1537 1009.25, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

1538 1009.25 Fee exemptions.--

1539 (2) The following students are exempt from the payment of
1540 tuition and fees, including lab fees, at a school district that
1541 provides postsecondary career programs, community college, or
1542 state university:

1543 (c) A student who ~~the state has determined is eligible for~~
1544 ~~the Road to Independence Scholarship, regardless of whether an~~
1545 ~~award is issued or not, or a student who is or was at the time~~
1546 he or she reached 18 years of age in the custody of the
1547 Department of Children and Family Services or a relative under
1548 s. 39.5085, or who is adopted from the Department of Children
1549 and Family Services after May 5, 1997, or who, after spending at
1550 least 6 months in the custody of the department after reaching
1551 16 years of age, was placed in a guardianship by the court. Such
1552 exemption includes fees associated with enrollment in career-
1553 preparatory instruction and completion of the college-level

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1554 communication and computation skills testing program. Such an
1555 exemption is available to any student who was in the custody of
1556 a relative under s. 39.5085 at the time he or she reached 18
1557 years of age or was adopted from the Department of Children and
1558 Family Services after May 5, 1997; however, the exemption
1559 remains valid for no more than 4 years after the date of
1560 graduation from high school.

1561 Section 14. The sum of \$11.4 million in recurring funds is
1562 appropriated from the General Revenue Fund to the Ounce of
1563 Prevention Fund of Florida for the 2006-2007 fiscal year to fund
1564 the expansion and enhancement of the Healthy Families Florida
1565 program statewide. Of that amount, \$4.3 million shall be used
1566 for cost-of-living increases to retain home visiting staff, \$3.1
1567 million shall be used to serve the 14 counties that are not
1568 presently served, and \$4 million shall be used to add high-risk
1569 specialists to the core staffing model for each Healthy Families
1570 Florida project.

1571 Section 15. This act shall take effect July 1, 2006.