

HB 625

2008

1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to independent living transition services;
3 amending s. 409.1451, F.S.; providing for family foster
4 homes, residential child-caring agencies, or other
5 authorized caregivers to be included in the development of
6 plans for activities for certain children; requiring
7 specified information to be included in a report to the
8 Legislature by the Independent Living Services Advisory
9 Council; providing an effective date.

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

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13 Section 1. Paragraph (a) of subsection (3) of section
14 409.1451, Florida Statutes, is amended, and paragraph (e) is
15 added to subsection (7) of that section, to read:

16 409.1451 Independent living transition services.--

17 (3) PREPARATION FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING.--

18 (a) It is the intent of the Legislature for the Department
19 of Children and Family Services to assist older children in
20 foster care and young adults who exit foster care at age 18 in
21 making the transition to independent living and self-sufficiency
22 as adults. The department shall provide such children and young
23 adults with opportunities to participate in life skills
24 activities in their foster families and communities which are
25 reasonable and appropriate for their respective ages or for any
26 special needs they may have and shall provide them with services
27 to build life skills and increase their ability to live
28 independently and become self-sufficient. To support the

29 provision of opportunities for participation in age-appropriate
30 life skills activities, the department shall:

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

34 2. Provide training for staff and foster parents to
35 address the issues of older children in foster care in
36 transitioning to adulthood, which shall include information on
37 high school completion, grant applications, vocational school
38 opportunities, supporting education and employment
39 opportunities, and opportunities to participate in appropriate
40 daily activities.

41 3. Develop procedures to maximize the authority of foster
42 parents, family foster homes, residential child-caring agencies,
43 or other authorized caregivers to approve participation in age-
44 appropriate activities of children in their care. The age-
45 appropriate activities and the authority of the foster parent,
46 family foster home, residential child-caring agency, or
47 caregiver shall be developed into a written plan that the foster
48 parent, family foster home, residential child-caring agency, or
49 caregiver, the child, and the case manager all develop together,
50 sign, and follow. This plan must include specific goals and
51 objectives and be reviewed and updated no less than quarterly.
52 Foster parents, family foster homes, residential child-caring
53 agencies, or other authorized caregivers who have developed a
54 written plan as described in this subparagraph shall not be held
55 responsible under administrative rules or laws pertaining to
56 state licensure or have their licensure status in any manner

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57 | jeopardized as a result of the actions of a child engaged in the
58 | approved age-appropriate activities specified in the written
59 | plan.

60 | 4. Provide opportunities for older children in foster care
61 | to interact with mentors.

62 | 5. Develop and implement procedures for older children to
63 | directly access and manage the personal allowance they receive
64 | from the department in order to learn responsibility and
65 | participate in age-appropriate life skills activities to the
66 | extent feasible.

67 | 6. Make a good faith effort to fully explain, prior to
68 | execution of any signature, if required, any document, report,
69 | form, or other record, whether written or electronic, presented
70 | to a child or young adult pursuant to this chapter and allow for
71 | the recipient to ask any appropriate questions necessary to
72 | fully understand the document. It shall be the responsibility of
73 | the person presenting the document to the child or young adult
74 | to comply with this subparagraph.

75 | (7) INDEPENDENT LIVING SERVICES ADVISORY COUNCIL.--The
76 | Secretary of Children and Family Services shall establish the
77 | Independent Living Services Advisory Council for the purpose of
78 | reviewing and making recommendations concerning the
79 | implementation and operation of the independent living
80 | transition services. This advisory council shall continue to
81 | function as specified in this subsection until the Legislature
82 | determines that the advisory council can no longer provide a
83 | valuable contribution to the department's efforts to achieve the
84 | goals of the independent living transition services.

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85 (e) The advisory council report required under paragraph
86 (b) to be submitted to the substantive committees of the Senate
87 and the House of Representatives by December 31, 2008, shall
88 include an analysis of the system of independent living
89 transition services for young adults who attain 18 years of age
90 while in foster care prior to completing high school or its
91 equivalent and recommendations for department or legislative
92 action. The council shall assess and report on the most
93 effective method of assisting these young adults to complete
94 high school or its equivalent by examining the practices of
95 other states.

96 Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2008.