

By the Committee on Children, Families, and Elder Affairs

586-02285-11

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1                   A bill to be entitled  
2           An act relating to child protection; requiring the  
3           Secretary of Children and Family Services to establish  
4           the Child Protection Response Workgroup for the  
5           purpose of developing an implementation plan for a  
6           differential response system to be used in responding  
7           to reports of child abuse or neglect; specifying the  
8           duties of the workgroup; requiring a report to the  
9           Legislature; requiring the Secretary of Children and  
10          Family Services to establish the Child Welfare  
11          Professional Advisory Council; specifying the scope of  
12          work of the council; providing for the secretary to  
13          appoint members to the council; requiring the  
14          Department of Children and Family services to provide  
15          administrative support; providing for members to be  
16          reimbursed for per diem and travel expenses to the  
17          extent resources are available; requiring an annual  
18          report to the Legislature; providing an effective  
19          date.

20  
21 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

22  
23           Section 1. Child Protection Response Workgroup.—The  
24           Secretary of Children and Family Services shall establish the  
25           Child Protection Response Workgroup for the purpose of  
26           developing a plan that will allow the department to fully  
27           implement a differential response system for purposes of  
28           responding to reports of child abuse or neglect.

29           (1) The workgroup shall, at a minimum, examine best

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30 practices developed by other states that have successfully  
31 implemented a similar response system and update and finalize  
32 the work plan that was designed for the department by the Child  
33 Welfare Institute in 2006, taking into consideration the  
34 outcomes of the 2008 differential response pilot programs.

35 (2) The workgroup shall report its findings and  
36 recommendations for implementing a differential response system  
37 to the appropriate substantive committees of the Senate and the  
38 House of Representatives by December 31, 2011. The report to the  
39 Legislature shall include a detailed list of tasks and a  
40 timeline for future implementation of a differential response  
41 system, the requirements and expectations for participation by  
42 community-based care lead agencies, a plan to integrate the use  
43 of the sheriff's offices to conduct child protective  
44 investigations within the differential response system, and a  
45 statewide survey of services available to families.

46 Section 2. Child Welfare Professional Advisory Council.—The  
47 Secretary of Children and Family Services shall establish the  
48 Child Welfare Professional Advisory Council for the purpose of  
49 reviewing and making recommendations relating to the education  
50 and qualifications of the child welfare staff employed within  
51 the department, the sheriff's offices contracted to conduct  
52 child protective investigations, and the community-based care  
53 lead agencies and their subcontractors. The advisory council  
54 shall continue to function as specified in this section until  
55 the Legislature determines that the advisory council no longer  
56 provides a valuable contribution to efforts to reprofessionalize  
57 the duties carried out by staff who provide child welfare  
58 services.

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59       (1) Specifically, the scope of work of the advisory council  
60 shall include, at a minimum:

61       (a) An examination of hiring practices in other states that  
62 require all child welfare staff to hold degrees in social work,  
63 particularly those states that have privatized the provision of  
64 child welfare services, such as Kansas;

65       (b) Incentives necessary to hire and retain employees who  
66 have bachelor's or master's degrees in social work;

67       (c) Incentives necessary to enable current staff to obtain  
68 a bachelor's or master's degree while continuing employment;

69       (d) An examination of child welfare certifications issued  
70 by schools of social work, the department, or third-party  
71 credentialing entities;

72       (e) An analysis of the benefits, including cost benefits,  
73 of requiring that all child welfare staff hold a bachelor's or  
74 master's degree in social work from a degree program certified  
75 by the Council on Social Work Education or hold a degree from an  
76 accredited human services degree program; and

77       (f) An examination of ways to increase the amount of  
78 federal funding under the Title IV-E Child Welfare Program which  
79 is available to this state.

80       (2) Members of the advisory council shall be appointed by  
81 the secretary of the department. The membership of the advisory  
82 council may not exceed 15 members and must include, at a  
83 minimum, representatives from the headquarters and circuit  
84 offices of the Department of Children and Family Services,  
85 community-based care lead agencies, the sheriff's offices  
86 contracted to conduct child protective investigations, third-  
87 party credentialing entities, state schools that are members of

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88 the National Association of Deans and Directors Schools of  
89 Social Work, and school faculty who work with students receiving  
90 funding under the Title IV-E Child Welfare Program and who teach  
91 specialized courses in child welfare. The secretary shall  
92 determine the length of the term to be served by each member  
93 appointed to the advisory council, which may not exceed 4 years.  
94 Members may be reappointed for additional terms.

95 (3) The department shall provide administrative support to  
96 the Child Welfare Professional Advisory Council to accomplish  
97 its assigned tasks. The advisory council shall be afforded  
98 access to all appropriate data from the department, each  
99 community-based care lead agency, and other relevant agencies in  
100 order to accomplish the tasks set forth in this section. The  
101 data collected may not include any information that would  
102 identify a specific child or young adult.

103 (4) Members of the council shall serve without  
104 compensation, but are entitled to reimbursement for per diem and  
105 travel expenses as provided in s. 112.061, Florida Statutes, to  
106 the extent resources are available.

107 (5) The advisory council shall report its recommendations  
108 and a plan, including a timeline for the statewide  
109 reprofessionalization of all duties performed by child welfare  
110 staff, to the appropriate substantive committees of the Senate  
111 and the House of Representatives by December 31 of each year,  
112 with the first report being due by December 31, 2011.

113 Section 3. This act shall take effect July 1, 2011.