

20131036e2

1                   A bill to be entitled  
2           An act relating to independent living; providing a  
3           short title; amending s. 39.013, F.S.; providing that  
4           when the court obtains jurisdiction over a child who  
5           has been found to be dependent, the court retains  
6           jurisdiction until the child reaches 21 years of age;  
7           providing exceptions; amending s. 39.6013, F.S.;  
8           conforming a cross-reference; creating s. 39.6035,  
9           F.S.; requiring the Department of Children and  
10          Families, the community-based care provider, and  
11          others to assist a child in developing a transition  
12          plan after the child reaches 17 years of age and  
13          requiring a meeting to develop the plan; specifying  
14          requirements and procedures for the transition plan;  
15          requiring periodic review of the transition plan;  
16          requiring the court to approve the transition plan  
17          before the child leaves foster care and the court  
18          terminates jurisdiction; creating s. 39.6251, F.S.;  
19          providing definitions; providing that a young adult  
20          may remain in foster care under certain circumstances  
21          after attaining 18 years of age; specifying criteria  
22          for extended foster care; providing that the  
23          permanency goal for a young adult who chooses to  
24          remain in care is transition from care to independent  
25          living; specifying dates for eligibility for a young  
26          adult to remain in extended foster care; providing for  
27          supervised living arrangements in extended foster  
28          care; authorizing a young adult to return to foster  
29          care under certain circumstances; specifying services

20131036e2

30 that must be provided to the young adult; directing  
31 the court to retain jurisdiction and hold review  
32 hearings; amending s. 39.701, F.S.; revising judicial  
33 review of foster care cases; making technical changes;  
34 providing criteria for review hearings for children  
35 younger than 18 years of age; providing criteria for  
36 review hearings for children 17 years of age;  
37 requiring the department to verify that the child has  
38 certain documents; requiring the department to update  
39 the case plan; providing for review hearings for young  
40 adults in foster care; amending s. 409.145, F.S.;  
41 requiring the department to develop and implement a  
42 system of care for children in foster care; specifying  
43 the goals of the foster care system; requiring the  
44 department to assist foster care caregivers to achieve  
45 quality parenting; specifying the roles and  
46 responsibilities of caregivers, the department, and  
47 others; providing for transition from a caregiver;  
48 requiring information sharing; providing for the  
49 adoption and use of a "reasonable and prudent parent"  
50 standard; defining terms; providing for the  
51 application for the standard of care; providing for  
52 limiting liability of caregivers; specifying foster  
53 care room and board rates; authorizing community-based  
54 care service providers to pay a supplemental monthly  
55 room and board payment to foster parents for providing  
56 certain services; directing the department to adopt  
57 rules; deleting obsolete provisions; amending s.  
58 409.1451, F.S.; providing for the Road-to-Independence

20131036e2

59 program; providing legislative findings and intent;  
60 providing for postsecondary services and supports;  
61 specifying aftercare services; providing for appeals  
62 of a determination of eligibility; providing for  
63 portability of services across county lines and  
64 between lead agencies; providing for accountability;  
65 creating the Independent Living Services Advisory  
66 Council; providing for membership and specifying the  
67 duties and functions of the council; requiring reports  
68 and recommendations; directing the department to adopt  
69 rules; amending s. 409.175; allowing for young adults  
70 remaining in care to be considered in total number of  
71 children placed in a foster home; amending s. 409.903,  
72 F.S.; conforming a cross-reference; directing the  
73 Department of Children and Families to work in  
74 collaboration with the Board of Governors, the Florida  
75 College System, and the Department of Education to  
76 help address the need for a comprehensive support  
77 structure in the academic arena to assist young adults  
78 who have been or remain in the foster care system;  
79 providing for an annual report; directing the  
80 Department of Children and Families in collaboration  
81 with the Florida Foster and Adoptive Parent  
82 Association and the Quality Parenting Initiative to  
83 develop design training for caregivers; providing  
84 effective dates.

85  
86 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:  
87

20131036e2

88           Section 1. This act may be cited as the "Nancy C. Detert  
89 Common Sense and Compassion Independent Living Act."

90           Section 2. Subsection (2) of section 39.013, Florida  
91 Statutes, is amended to read:

92           39.013 Procedures and jurisdiction; right to counsel.—

93           (2) The circuit court has exclusive original jurisdiction  
94 of all proceedings under this chapter, of a child voluntarily  
95 placed with a licensed child-caring agency, a licensed child-  
96 placing agency, or the department, and of the adoption of  
97 children whose parental rights have been terminated under this  
98 chapter. Jurisdiction attaches when the initial shelter  
99 petition, dependency petition, or termination of parental rights  
100 petition, or a petition for an injunction to prevent child abuse  
101 issued pursuant to s. 39.504, is filed or when a child is taken  
102 into the custody of the department. The circuit court may assume  
103 jurisdiction over any such proceeding regardless of whether the  
104 child was in the physical custody of both parents, was in the  
105 sole legal or physical custody of only one parent, caregiver, or  
106 some other person, or was not in the physical or legal custody  
107 of any person when the event or condition occurred that brought  
108 the child to the attention of the court. When the court obtains  
109 jurisdiction of any child who has been found to be dependent,  
110 the court shall retain jurisdiction, unless relinquished by its  
111 order, until the child reaches 21 ~~18~~ years of age, with the  
112 following exceptions:

113           (a) If a young adult chooses to leave foster care upon  
114 reaching 18 years of age.

115           (b) If a young adult does not meet the eligibility  
116 requirements to remain in foster care under s. 39.6251 or

20131036e2

117 chooses to leave care under that section.

118 (c) However, If a young adult ~~youth~~ petitions the court at  
119 any time before his or her 19th birthday requesting the court's  
120 continued jurisdiction, the juvenile court may retain  
121 jurisdiction under this chapter for a period not to exceed 1  
122 year following the young adult's ~~youth's~~ 18th birthday for the  
123 purpose of determining whether appropriate ~~aftercare support,~~  
124 ~~Road to Independence Program, transitional support, mental~~  
125 ~~health, and developmental disability services,~~ that were  
126 required to be provided to the young adult before reaching 18  
127 years of age, to the extent otherwise authorized by law, have  
128 been provided ~~to the formerly dependent child who was in the~~  
129 ~~legal custody of the department immediately before his or her~~  
130 ~~18th birthday.~~

131 (d) If a petition for special immigrant juvenile status and  
132 an application for adjustment of status have been filed on  
133 behalf of a foster child and the petition and application have  
134 not been granted by the time the child reaches 18 years of age,  
135 the court may retain jurisdiction over the dependency case  
136 solely for the purpose of allowing the continued consideration  
137 of the petition and application by federal authorities. Review  
138 hearings for the child shall be set solely for the purpose of  
139 determining the status of the petition and application. The  
140 court's jurisdiction terminates upon the final decision of the  
141 federal authorities. Retention of jurisdiction in this instance  
142 does not affect the services available to a young adult under s.  
143 409.1451. The court may not retain jurisdiction of the case  
144 after the immigrant child's 22nd birthday.

145 Section 3. Subsection (6) of section 39.6013, Florida

20131036e2

146 Statutes, is amended to read:

147 39.6013 Case plan amendments.—

148 (6) The case plan is deemed amended as to the child's  
149 health, mental health, and education records required by s.  
150 39.6012 when the child's updated health and education records  
151 are filed by the department under s. 39.701(2)(a) ~~s.~~  
152 ~~39.701(8)(a)~~.

153 Section 4. Section 39.6035, Florida Statutes, is created to  
154 read:

155 39.6035 Transition plan.—

156 (1) During the 180-day period after a child reaches 17  
157 years of age, the department and the community-based care  
158 provider, in collaboration with the caregiver and any other  
159 individual whom the child would like to include, shall assist  
160 the child in developing a transition plan. The required  
161 transition plan is in addition to standard case management  
162 requirements. The transition plan must address specific options  
163 for the child to use in obtaining services, including housing,  
164 health insurance, education, and workforce support and  
165 employment services. The plan must also consider establishing  
166 and maintaining naturally occurring mentoring relationships and  
167 other personal support services. The transition plan may be as  
168 detailed as the child chooses. In developing the transition  
169 plan, the department and the community-based provider shall:

170 (a) Provide the child with the documentation required  
171 pursuant to s. 39.701(3); and

172 (b) Coordinate the transition plan with the independent  
173 living provisions in the case plan and, for a child with  
174 disabilities, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

20131036e2

175 transition plan.

176 (2) The department and the child shall schedule a time,  
177 date, and place for a meeting to assist the child in drafting  
178 the transition plan. The time, date, and place must be  
179 convenient for the child and any individual whom the child would  
180 like to include. This meeting shall be conducted in the child's  
181 primary language.

182 (3) The transition plan shall be reviewed periodically with  
183 the child, the department, and other individuals of the child's  
184 choice and updated when necessary before each judicial review so  
185 long as the child or young adult remains in care.

186 (4) If a child is planning to leave care upon reaching 18  
187 years of age, the transition plan must be approved by the court  
188 before the child leaves care and the court terminates  
189 jurisdiction.

190 Section 5. Section 39.6251, Florida Statutes, is created to  
191 read:

192 39.6251 Continuing care for young adults.—

193 (1) As used in this section, the term "child" means an  
194 individual who has not attained 21 years of age, and the term  
195 "young adult" means an individual who has attained 18 years of  
196 age but who has not attained 21 years of age.

197 (2) The primary goal for a child in care is permanency. A  
198 child who is living in licensed care on his or her 18th birthday  
199 and who has not achieved permanency under s. 39.621, is eligible  
200 to remain in licensed care under the jurisdiction of the court  
201 and in the care of the department. A child is eligible to remain  
202 in licensed care if he or she is:

203 (a) Completing secondary education or a program leading to

20131036e2

204 an equivalent credential;

205 (b) Enrolled in an institution that provides postsecondary  
206 or vocational education;

207 (c) Participating in a program or activity designed to  
208 promote or eliminate barriers to employment;

209 (d) Employed for at least 80 hours per month; or

210 (e) Unable to participate in programs or activities listed  
211 in (a)-(d) full time due to a physical, intellectual, emotional,  
212 or psychiatric condition that limits participation. Any such  
213 barrier to participation must be supported by documentation in  
214 the child's case file or school or medical records of a  
215 physical, intellectual, or psychiatric condition that impairs  
216 the child's ability to perform one or more life activities.

217 (3) The permanency goal for a young adult who chooses to  
218 remain in care is transition from licensed care to independent  
219 living.

220 (4) (a) The young adult must reside in a supervised living  
221 environment that is approved by the department or a community-  
222 based care lead agency. The young adult shall live  
223 independently, but in an environment in which he or she is  
224 provided supervision, case management, and supportive services  
225 by the department or lead agency. Such an environment must offer  
226 developmentally appropriate freedom and responsibility to  
227 prepare the young adult for adulthood. For the purposes of this  
228 subsection, a supervised living arrangement may include a  
229 licensed foster home, licensed group home, college dormitory,  
230 shared housing, apartment, or another housing arrangement if the  
231 arrangement is approved by the community-based care lead agency  
232 and is acceptable to the young adult, with first choice being a



20131036e2

233 licensed foster home. A young adult may continue to reside with  
234 the same licensed foster family or group care provider with whom  
235 he or she was residing at the time he or she reached the age of  
236 18 years.

237 (b) Before approving the residential setting in which the  
238 young adult will live, the department or community-based care  
239 lead agency must ensure that:

240 1. The young adult will be provided with a level of  
241 supervision consistent with his or her individual education,  
242 health care needs, permanency plan, and independent living goals  
243 as assessed by the department or lead agency with input from the  
244 young adult. Twenty-four hour on-site supervision is not  
245 required, however, 24-hour crisis intervention and support must  
246 be available.

247 2. The young adult will live in an independent living  
248 environment that offers, at a minimum, life skills instruction,  
249 counseling, educational support, employment preparation and  
250 placement, and development of support networks. The  
251 determination of the type and duration of services shall be  
252 based on the young adult's assessed needs, interests, and input  
253 and must be consistent with the goals set in the young adult's  
254 case plan.

255 (5) Eligibility for a young adult to remain in extended  
256 foster care ends on the earliest of the dates that the young  
257 adult:

258 1. Reaches 21 years of age or, in the case of a young adult  
259 with a disability, reaches 22 years of age;

260 2. Leaves care to live in a permanent home consistent with  
261 his or her permanency plan; or

20131036e2

262 3. Knowingly and voluntarily withdraws his or her consent  
263 to participate in extended care. Withdrawal of consent to  
264 participate in extended care shall be verified by the court  
265 pursuant to s. 39.701, unless the young adult refuses to  
266 participate in any further court proceeding.

267 (6) A young adult who is between the ages of 18 and 21 and  
268 who has left care may return to care by applying to the  
269 community-based care lead agency for readmission. The community-  
270 based care lead agency shall readmit the young adult if he or  
271 she continues to meet the eligibility requirements in this  
272 section.

273 (a) The department shall develop a standard procedure and  
274 application packet for readmission to care to be used by all  
275 community-based care lead agencies.

276 (b) Within 30 days after the young adult has been  
277 readmitted to care, the community-based care lead agency shall  
278 assign a case manager to update the case plan and the transition  
279 plan and to arrange for the required services. Such activities  
280 shall be undertaken in consultation with the young adult. The  
281 department shall petition the court to reinstate jurisdiction  
282 over the young adult. Notwithstanding s. 39.013(2), the court  
283 shall resume jurisdiction over the young adult if the department  
284 establishes that he or she continues to meet the eligibility  
285 requirements in this section.

286 (7) During each period of time that a young adult is in  
287 care, the community-based lead agency shall provide regular case  
288 management reviews that must include at least monthly contact  
289 with the case manager. If a young adult lives outside the  
290 service area of his or her community-based care lead agency,

20131036e2

291 monthly contact may occur by telephone.

292 (8) During the time that a young adult is in care, the  
293 court shall maintain jurisdiction to ensure that the department  
294 and the lead agencies are providing services and coordinate  
295 with, and maintain oversight of, other agencies involved in  
296 implementing the young adult's case plan, individual education  
297 plan, and transition plan. The court shall review the status of  
298 the young adult at least every 6 months and hold a permanency  
299 review hearing at least annually. The court may appoint a  
300 guardian ad litem or continue the appointment of a guardian ad  
301 litem with the young adult's consent. The young adult or any  
302 other party to the dependency case may request an additional  
303 hearing or review.

304 (9) The department shall establish a procedure by which a  
305 young adult may appeal a determination of eligibility to remain  
306 in care that was made by a community-based care lead agency. The  
307 procedure must be readily accessible to young adults, must  
308 provide for timely decisions, and must provide for an appeal to  
309 the department. The decision of the department constitutes final  
310 agency action and is reviewable by the court as provided in s.  
311 120.68.

312 Section 6. Section 39.701, Florida Statutes, is amended to  
313 read:

314 39.701 Judicial review.—

315 (1) GENERAL PROVISIONS.—

316 (a) The court shall have continuing jurisdiction in  
317 accordance with this section and shall review the status of the  
318 child at least every 6 months as required by this subsection or  
319 more frequently if the court deems it necessary or desirable.

20131036e2

320 (b) The court shall retain jurisdiction over a child  
321 returned to his or her parents for a minimum period of 6 months  
322 following the reunification, but, at that time, based on a  
323 report of the social service agency and the guardian ad litem,  
324 if one has been appointed, and any other relevant factors, the  
325 court shall make a determination as to whether supervision by  
326 the department and the court's jurisdiction shall continue or be  
327 terminated.

328 (c) 1.~~(2)(a)~~ The court shall review the status of the child  
329 and shall hold a hearing as provided in this part at least every  
330 6 months until the child reaches permanency status. The court  
331 may dispense with the attendance of the child at the hearing,  
332 but may not dispense with the hearing or the presence of other  
333 parties to the review unless before the review a hearing is held  
334 before a citizen review panel.

335 2.~~(b)~~ Citizen review panels may conduct hearings to review  
336 the status of a child. The court shall select the cases  
337 appropriate for referral to the citizen review panels and may  
338 order the attendance of the parties at the review panel  
339 hearings. However, any party may object to the referral of a  
340 case to a citizen review panel. Whenever such an objection has  
341 been filed with the court, the court shall review the substance  
342 of the objection and may conduct the review itself or refer the  
343 review to a citizen review panel. All parties retain the right  
344 to take exception to the findings or recommended orders of a  
345 citizen review panel in accordance with Rule 1.490(h), Florida  
346 Rules of Civil Procedure.

347 3.~~(e)~~ Notice of a hearing by a citizen review panel must be  
348 provided as set forth in paragraph (f) ~~subsection (5)~~. At the

20131036e2

349 conclusion of a citizen review panel hearing, each party may  
350 propose a recommended order to the chairperson of the panel.  
351 Thereafter, the citizen review panel shall submit its report,  
352 copies of the proposed recommended orders, and a copy of the  
353 panel's recommended order to the court. The citizen review  
354 panel's recommended order must be limited to the dispositional  
355 options available to the court in paragraph (2) (d) subsection  
356 ~~(10)~~. Each party may file exceptions to the report and  
357 recommended order of the citizen review panel in accordance with  
358 Rule 1.490, Florida Rules of Civil Procedure.

359 (d) 1. (3) (a) The initial judicial review hearing must be  
360 held no later than 90 days after the date of the disposition  
361 hearing or after the date of the hearing at which the court  
362 approves the case plan, whichever comes first, but in no event  
363 shall the review be held later than 6 months after the date the  
364 child was removed from the home. Citizen review panels may ~~shall~~  
365 not conduct more than two consecutive reviews without the child  
366 and the parties coming before the court for a judicial review.

367 2. (b) If the citizen review panel recommends extending the  
368 goal of reunification for any case plan beyond 12 months from  
369 the date the child was removed from the home, the case plan was  
370 adopted, or the child was adjudicated dependent, whichever date  
371 came first, the court must schedule a judicial review hearing to  
372 be conducted by the court within 30 days after receiving the  
373 recommendation from the citizen review panel.

374 3. (e) If the child is placed in the custody of the  
375 department or a licensed child-placing agency for the purpose of  
376 adoptive placement, judicial reviews must be held at least every  
377 6 months until the adoption is finalized.

20131036e2

378        4.~~(d)~~ If the department and the court have established a  
379 formal agreement that includes specific authorization for  
380 particular cases, the department may conduct administrative  
381 reviews instead of the judicial reviews for children in out-of-  
382 home care. Notices of such administrative reviews must be  
383 provided to all parties. However, an administrative review may  
384 not be substituted for the first judicial review, and in every  
385 case the court must conduct a judicial review at least every 6  
386 months. Any party dissatisfied with the results of an  
387 administrative review may petition for a judicial review.

388        5.~~(e)~~ The clerk of the circuit court shall schedule  
389 judicial review hearings in order to comply with the mandated  
390 times cited in this section.

391        6.~~(f)~~ In each case in which a child has been voluntarily  
392 placed with the licensed child-placing agency, the agency shall  
393 notify the clerk of the court in the circuit where the child  
394 resides of such placement within 5 working days. Notification of  
395 the court is not required for any child who will be in out-of-  
396 home care no longer than 30 days unless that child is placed in  
397 out-of-home care a second time within a 12-month period. If the  
398 child is returned to the custody of the parents before the  
399 scheduled review hearing or if the child is placed for adoption,  
400 the child-placing agency shall notify the court of the child's  
401 return or placement within 5 working days, and the clerk of the  
402 court shall cancel the review hearing.

403        (e)~~(4)~~ The court shall schedule the date, time, and  
404 location of the next judicial review during the judicial review  
405 hearing and shall list same in the judicial review order.

406        (f)~~(5)~~ Notice of a judicial review hearing or a citizen

20131036e2

407 review panel hearing, and a copy of the motion for judicial  
408 review, if any, must be served by the clerk of the court upon  
409 all of the following persons, if available to be served,  
410 regardless of whether the person was present at the previous  
411 hearing at which the date, time, and location of the hearing was  
412 announced:

413 1.(a) The social service agency charged with the  
414 supervision of care, custody, or guardianship of the child, if  
415 that agency is not the movant.

416 2.(b) The foster parent or legal custodian in whose home  
417 the child resides.

418 3.(c) The parents.

419 4.(d) The guardian ad litem for the child, or the  
420 representative of the guardian ad litem program if the program  
421 has been appointed.

422 5.(e) The attorney for the child.

423 6.(f) The child, if the child is 13 years of age or older.

424 7.(g) Any preadoptive parent.

425 8.(h) Such other persons as the court may direct.

426 (g)(6) The attorney for the department shall notify a  
427 relative who submits a request for notification of all  
428 proceedings and hearings pursuant to s. 39.301(14)(b). The  
429 notice shall include the date, time, and location of the next  
430 judicial review hearing.

431 ~~(7)(a) In addition to paragraphs (1)(a) and (2)(a), the~~  
432 ~~court shall hold a judicial review hearing within 90 days after~~  
433 ~~a youth's 17th birthday. The court shall also issue an order,~~  
434 ~~separate from the order on judicial review, that the disability~~  
435 ~~of nonage of the youth has been removed pursuant to s. 743.045.~~

20131036e2

436 ~~The court shall continue to hold timely judicial review hearings~~  
437 ~~thereafter. In addition, the court may review the status of the~~  
438 ~~child more frequently during the year prior to the youth's 18th~~  
439 ~~birthday if necessary. At each review held under this~~  
440 ~~subsection, in addition to any information or report provided to~~  
441 ~~the court, the foster parent, legal custodian, guardian ad~~  
442 ~~litem, and the child shall be given the opportunity to address~~  
443 ~~the court with any information relevant to the child's best~~  
444 ~~interests, particularly as it relates to independent living~~  
445 ~~transition services. In addition to any information or report~~  
446 ~~provided to the court, the department shall include in its~~  
447 ~~judicial review social study report written verification that~~  
448 ~~the child:~~

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

453 ~~2. Has been provided with a certified copy of his or her~~  
454 ~~birth certificate and, if the child does not have a valid~~  
455 ~~driver's license, a Florida identification card issued under s.~~  
456 ~~322.051.~~

457 ~~3. Has been provided information relating to Social~~  
458 ~~Security Insurance benefits if the child is eligible for these~~  
459 ~~benefits. If the child has received these benefits and they are~~  
460 ~~being held in trust for the child, a full accounting of those~~  
461 ~~funds must be provided and the child must be informed about how~~  
462 ~~to access those funds.~~

463 ~~4. Has been provided with information and training related~~  
464 ~~to budgeting skills, interviewing skills, and parenting skills.~~



20131036e2

465 ~~5. Has been provided with all relevant information related~~  
466 ~~to the Road to Independence Program, including, but not limited~~  
467 ~~to, eligibility requirements, forms necessary to apply, and~~  
468 ~~assistance in completing the forms. The child shall also be~~  
469 ~~informed that, if he or she is eligible for the Road to-~~  
470 ~~Independence Program, he or she may reside with the licensed~~  
471 ~~foster family or group care provider with whom the child was~~  
472 ~~residing at the time of attaining his or her 18th birthday or~~  
473 ~~may reside in another licensed foster home or with a group care~~  
474 ~~provider arranged by the department.~~

475 ~~6. Has an open bank account, or has identification~~  
476 ~~necessary to open an account, and has been provided with~~  
477 ~~essential banking skills.~~

478 ~~7. Has been provided with information on public assistance~~  
479 ~~and how to apply.~~

480 ~~8. Has been provided a clear understanding of where he or~~  
481 ~~she will be living on his or her 18th birthday, how living~~  
482 ~~expenses will be paid, and what educational program or school he~~  
483 ~~or she will be enrolled in.~~

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

488 ~~10. Has been encouraged to attend all judicial review~~  
489 ~~hearings occurring after his or her 17th birthday.~~

490 ~~(b) At the first judicial review hearing held subsequent to~~  
491 ~~the child's 17th birthday, in addition to the requirements of~~  
492 ~~subsection (8), the department shall provide the court with an~~  
493 ~~updated case plan that includes specific information related to~~

20131036e2

494 ~~independent living services that have been provided since the~~  
495 ~~child's 13th birthday, or since the date the child came into~~  
496 ~~foster care, whichever came later.~~

497 ~~(c) At the time of a judicial review hearing held pursuant~~  
498 ~~to this subsection, if, in the opinion of the court, the~~  
499 ~~department has not complied with its obligations as specified in~~  
500 ~~the written case plan or in the provision of independent living~~  
501 ~~services as required by s. 409.1451 and this subsection, the~~  
502 ~~court shall issue a show cause order. If cause is shown for~~  
503 ~~failure to comply, the court shall give the department 30 days~~  
504 ~~within which to comply and, on failure to comply with this or~~  
505 ~~any subsequent order, the department may be held in contempt.~~

506 (2)(8) REVIEW HEARINGS FOR CHILDREN YOUNGER THAN 18 YEARS  
507 OF AGE.-

508 (a) Social study report for judicial review.-Before every  
509 judicial review hearing or citizen review panel hearing, the  
510 social service agency shall make an investigation and social  
511 study concerning all pertinent details relating to the child and  
512 shall furnish to the court or citizen review panel a written  
513 report that includes, but is not limited to:

514 1. A description of the type of placement the child is in  
515 at the time of the hearing, including the safety of the child  
516 and the continuing necessity for and appropriateness of the  
517 placement.

518 2. Documentation of the diligent efforts made by all  
519 parties to the case plan to comply with each applicable  
520 provision of the plan.

521 3. The amount of fees assessed and collected during the  
522 period of time being reported.

20131036e2

523 4. The services provided to the foster family or legal  
524 custodian in an effort to address the needs of the child as  
525 indicated in the case plan.

526 5. A statement that either:

527 a. The parent, though able to do so, did not comply  
528 substantially with the case plan, and the agency  
529 recommendations;

530 b. The parent did substantially comply with the case plan;  
531 or

532 c. The parent has partially complied with the case plan,  
533 with a summary of additional progress needed and the agency  
534 recommendations.

535 6. A statement from the foster parent or legal custodian  
536 providing any material evidence concerning the return of the  
537 child to the parent or parents.

538 7. A statement concerning the frequency, duration, and  
539 results of the parent-child visitation, if any, and the agency  
540 recommendations for an expansion or restriction of future  
541 visitation.

542 8. The number of times a child has been removed from his or  
543 her home and placed elsewhere, the number and types of  
544 placements that have occurred, and the reason for the changes in  
545 placement.

546 9. The number of times a child's educational placement has  
547 been changed, the number and types of educational placements  
548 which have occurred, and the reason for any change in placement.

549 10. If the child has reached 13 years of age but is not yet  
550 18 years of age, a statement from the caregiver on the progress  
551 the child has made in acquiring independent living skills ~~the~~

20131036e2

552 ~~results of the preindependent living, life skills, or~~  
553 ~~independent living assessment; the specific services needed; and~~  
554 ~~the status of the delivery of the identified services.~~

555 11. Copies of all medical, psychological, and educational  
556 records that support the terms of the case plan and that have  
557 been produced concerning the parents or any caregiver since the  
558 last judicial review hearing.

559 12. Copies of the child's current health, mental health,  
560 and education records as identified in s. 39.6012.

561 (b) Submission and distribution of reports.—

562 1. A copy of the social service agency's written report and  
563 the written report of the guardian ad litem must be served on  
564 all parties whose whereabouts are known; to the foster parents  
565 or legal custodians; and to the citizen review panel, at least  
566 72 hours before the judicial review hearing or citizen review  
567 panel hearing. The requirement for providing parents with a copy  
568 of the written report does not apply to those parents who have  
569 voluntarily surrendered their child for adoption or who have had  
570 their parental rights to the child terminated.

571 2.(e) In a case in which the child has been permanently  
572 placed with the social service agency, the agency shall furnish  
573 to the court a written report concerning the progress being made  
574 to place the child for adoption. If the child cannot be placed  
575 for adoption, a report on the progress made by the child towards  
576 alternative permanency goals or placements, including, but not  
577 limited to, guardianship, long-term custody, long-term licensed  
578 custody, or independent living, must be submitted to the court.  
579 The report must be submitted to the court at least 72 hours  
580 before each scheduled judicial review.

20131036e2

581        3.~~(d)~~ In addition to or in lieu of any written statement  
582 provided to the court, the foster parent or legal custodian, or  
583 any preadoptive parent, shall be given the opportunity to  
584 address the court with any information relevant to the best  
585 interests of the child at any judicial review hearing.

586        (c)~~(9)~~ Review determinations.—The court and any citizen  
587 review panel shall take into consideration the information  
588 contained in the social services study and investigation and all  
589 medical, psychological, and educational records that support the  
590 terms of the case plan; testimony by the social services agency,  
591 the parent, the foster parent or legal custodian, the guardian  
592 ad litem or surrogate parent for educational decisionmaking if  
593 one has been appointed for the child, and any other person  
594 deemed appropriate; and any relevant and material evidence  
595 submitted to the court, including written and oral reports to  
596 the extent of their probative value. These reports and evidence  
597 may be received by the court in its effort to determine the  
598 action to be taken with regard to the child and may be relied  
599 upon to the extent of their probative value, even though not  
600 competent in an adjudicatory hearing. In its deliberations, the  
601 court and any citizen review panel shall seek to determine:

602        1.~~(a)~~ If the parent was advised of the right to receive  
603 assistance from any person or social service agency in the  
604 preparation of the case plan.

605        2.~~(b)~~ If the parent has been advised of the right to have  
606 counsel present at the judicial review or citizen review  
607 hearings. If not so advised, the court or citizen review panel  
608 shall advise the parent of such right.

609        3.~~(e)~~ If a guardian ad litem needs to be appointed for the

20131036e2

610 child in a case in which a guardian ad litem has not previously  
611 been appointed or if there is a need to continue a guardian ad  
612 litem in a case in which a guardian ad litem has been appointed.

613 4.~~(d)~~ Who holds the rights to make educational decisions  
614 for the child. If appropriate, the court may refer the child to  
615 the district school superintendent for appointment of a  
616 surrogate parent or may itself appoint a surrogate parent under  
617 the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and s. 39.0016.

618 5.~~(e)~~ The compliance or lack of compliance of all parties  
619 with applicable items of the case plan, including the parents'  
620 compliance with child support orders.

621 6.~~(f)~~ The compliance or lack of compliance with a  
622 visitation contract between the parent and the social service  
623 agency for contact with the child, including the frequency,  
624 duration, and results of the parent-child visitation and the  
625 reason for any noncompliance.

626 7.~~(g)~~ The compliance or lack of compliance of the parent in  
627 meeting specified financial obligations pertaining to the care  
628 of the child, including the reason for failure to comply if such  
629 is the case.

630 8.~~(h)~~ Whether the child is receiving safe and proper care  
631 according to s. 39.6012, including, but not limited to, the  
632 appropriateness of the child's current placement, including  
633 whether the child is in a setting that is as family-like and as  
634 close to the parent's home as possible, consistent with the  
635 child's best interests and special needs, and including  
636 maintaining stability in the child's educational placement, as  
637 documented by assurances from the community-based care provider  
638 that:

20131036e2

639        a.1- The placement of the child takes into account the  
640 appropriateness of the current educational setting and the  
641 proximity to the school in which the child is enrolled at the  
642 time of placement.

643        b.2- The community-based care agency has coordinated with  
644 appropriate local educational agencies to ensure that the child  
645 remains in the school in which the child is enrolled at the time  
646 of placement.

647        9.(i) A projected date likely for the child's return home  
648 or other permanent placement.

649        10.(j) When appropriate, the basis for the unwillingness or  
650 inability of the parent to become a party to a case plan. The  
651 court and the citizen review panel shall determine if the  
652 efforts of the social service agency to secure party  
653 participation in a case plan were sufficient.

654        11.(k) For a child who has reached 13 years of age but is  
655 not yet 18 years of age, the adequacy of the child's preparation  
656 for adulthood and independent living.

657        12.(l) If amendments to the case plan are required.  
658 Amendments to the case plan must be made under s. 39.6013.

659        (d)(10)(a) Orders.-

660        1. Based upon the criteria set forth in paragraph (c)  
661 ~~subsection (9)~~ and the recommended order of the citizen review  
662 panel, if any, the court shall determine whether or not the  
663 social service agency shall initiate proceedings to have a child  
664 declared a dependent child, return the child to the parent,  
665 continue the child in out-of-home care for a specified period of  
666 time, or initiate termination of parental rights proceedings for  
667 subsequent placement in an adoptive home. Amendments to the case

20131036e2

668 plan must be prepared as prescribed in s. 39.6013. If the court  
669 finds that the prevention or reunification efforts of the  
670 department will allow the child to remain safely at home or be  
671 safely returned to the home, the court shall allow the child to  
672 remain in or return to the home after making a specific finding  
673 of fact that the reasons for the creation of the case plan have  
674 been remedied to the extent that the child's safety, well-being,  
675 and physical, mental, and emotional health will not be  
676 endangered.

677 2.~~(b)~~ The court shall return the child to the custody of  
678 the parents at any time it determines that they have  
679 substantially complied with the case plan, if the court is  
680 satisfied that reunification will not be detrimental to the  
681 child's safety, well-being, and physical, mental, and emotional  
682 health.

683 3.~~(e)~~ If, in the opinion of the court, the social service  
684 agency has not complied with its obligations as specified in the  
685 written case plan, the court may find the social service agency  
686 in contempt, shall order the social service agency to submit its  
687 plans for compliance with the agreement, and shall require the  
688 social service agency to show why the child could not safely be  
689 returned to the home of the parents.

690 4.~~(d)~~ If, at any judicial review, the court finds that the  
691 parents have failed to substantially comply with the case plan  
692 to the degree that further reunification efforts are without  
693 merit and not in the best interest of the child, on its own  
694 motion, the court may order the filing of a petition for  
695 termination of parental rights, whether or not the time period  
696 as contained in the case plan for substantial compliance has



20131036e2

697 expired.

698 5.~~(e)~~ Within 6 months after the date that the child was  
699 placed in shelter care, the court shall conduct a judicial  
700 review hearing to review the child's permanency goal as  
701 identified in the case plan. At the hearing the court shall make  
702 findings regarding the likelihood of the child's reunification  
703 with the parent or legal custodian within 12 months after the  
704 removal of the child from the home. If the court makes a written  
705 finding that it is not likely that the child will be reunified  
706 with the parent or legal custodian within 12 months after the  
707 child was removed from the home, the department must file with  
708 the court, and serve on all parties, a motion to amend the case  
709 plan under s. 39.6013 and declare that it will use concurrent  
710 planning for the case plan. The department must file the motion  
711 within 10 business days after receiving the written finding of  
712 the court. The department must attach the proposed amended case  
713 plan to the motion. If concurrent planning is already being  
714 used, the case plan must document the efforts the department is  
715 taking to complete the concurrent goal.

716 6.~~(f)~~ The court may issue a protective order in assistance,  
717 or as a condition, of any other order made under this part. In  
718 addition to the requirements included in the case plan, the  
719 protective order may set forth requirements relating to  
720 reasonable conditions of behavior to be observed for a specified  
721 period of time by a person or agency who is before the court;  
722 and the order may require any person or agency to make periodic  
723 reports to the court containing such information as the court in  
724 its discretion may prescribe.

725 (3) REVIEW HEARINGS FOR CHILDREN 17 YEARS OF AGE.—

20131036e2

726 (a) In addition to the review and report required under  
727 paragraphs (1) (a) and (2) (a), respectively, the court shall hold  
728 a judicial review hearing within 90 days after a child's 17th  
729 birthday. The court shall also issue an order, separate from the  
730 order on judicial review, that the disability of nonage of the  
731 child has been removed pursuant to s. 743.045 and shall continue  
732 to hold timely judicial review hearings. If necessary, the court  
733 may review the status of the child more frequently during the  
734 year before the child's 18th birthday. At each review hearing  
735 held under this subsection, in addition to any information or  
736 report provided to the court by the foster parent, legal  
737 custodian, or guardian ad litem, the child shall be given the  
738 opportunity to address the court with any information relevant  
739 to the child's best interest, particularly in relation to  
740 independent living transition services. The department shall  
741 include in the social study report for judicial review written  
742 verification that the child has:

743 1. A current Medicaid card and all necessary information  
744 concerning the Medicaid program sufficient to prepare the child  
745 to apply for coverage upon reaching the age of 18, if such  
746 application is appropriate.

747 2. A certified copy of the child's birth certificate and,  
748 if the child does not have a valid driver license, a Florida  
749 identification card issued under s. 322.051.

750 3. A social security card and information relating to  
751 social security insurance benefits if the child is eligible for  
752 those benefits. If the child has received such benefits and they  
753 are being held in trust for the child, a full accounting of  
754 these funds must be provided and the child must be informed as

20131036e2

755 to how to access those funds.

756 4. All relevant information related to the Road-to-  
757 Independence Program, including, but not limited to, eligibility  
758 requirements, information on participation, and assistance in  
759 gaining admission to the program. If the child is eligible for  
760 the Road-to-Independence Program, he or she must be advised that  
761 he or she may continue to reside with the licensed family home  
762 or group care provider with whom the child was residing at the  
763 time the child attained his or her 18th birthday, in another  
764 licensed family home, or with a group care provider arranged by  
765 the department.

766 5. An open bank account or the identification necessary to  
767 open a bank account and to acquire essential banking and  
768 budgeting skills.

769 6. Information on public assistance and how to apply for  
770 public assistance.

771 7. A clear understanding of where he or she will be living  
772 on his or her 18th birthday, how living expenses will be paid,  
773 and the educational program or school in which he or she will be  
774 enrolled.

775 8. Information related to the ability of the child to  
776 remain in care until he or she reaches 21 years of age under s.  
777 39.013.

778 9. A letter providing the dates that the child is under the  
779 jurisdiction of the court.

780 10. A letter stating that the child is in compliance with  
781 financial aid documentation requirements.

782 11. The child's educational records.

783 12. The child's entire health and mental health records.

20131036e2

784 13. The process for accessing his or her case file.

785 14. A statement encouraging the child to attend all  
786 judicial review hearings occurring after the child's 17th  
787 birthday.

788 (b) At the first judicial review hearing held subsequent to  
789 the child's 17th birthday, the department shall provide the  
790 court with an updated case plan that includes specific  
791 information related to the independent living skills that the  
792 child has acquired since the child's 13th birthday, or since the  
793 date the child came into foster care, whichever came later.

794 (c) If the court finds at the judicial review hearing that  
795 the department has not met with its obligations to the child as  
796 stated in the written case plan or in the provision of  
797 independent living services, the court may issue an order  
798 directing the department to show cause as to why it has not done  
799 so. If the department cannot justify its noncompliance, the  
800 court may give the department 30 days within which to comply. If  
801 the department fails to comply within 30 days, the court may  
802 hold the department in contempt.

803 (d) At the last review hearing before the child reaches 18  
804 years of age, and in addition to the requirements of subsection  
805 (2), the court shall:

806 1. Address whether the child plans to remain in foster  
807 care, and, if so, ensure that the child's transition plan  
808 includes a plan for meeting one or more of the criteria  
809 specified in s. 39.6251.

810 2. Ensure that the transition plan includes a supervised  
811 living arrangement under s. 39.6251.

812 3. Ensure the child has been informed of:

20131036e2

813 a. The right to continued support and services from the  
814 department and the community-based care lead agency.

815 b. The right to request termination of dependency  
816 jurisdiction and be discharged from foster care.

817 c. The opportunity to reenter foster care pursuant to s.  
818 39.6251.

819 4. Ensure that the young adult, if he or she requests  
820 termination of dependency jurisdiction and discharge from foster  
821 care, has been informed of:

822 a. Services or benefits for which the young adult may be  
823 eligible based on his or her former placement in foster care;

824 b. Services or benefits that may be lost through  
825 termination of dependency jurisdiction; and

826 c. Other federal, state, local, or community-based services  
827 or supports available to him or her.

828 (4) REVIEW HEARINGS FOR YOUNG ADULTS IN FOSTER CARE.—  
829 During each period of time that a young adult remains in foster  
830 care, the court shall review the status of the young adult at  
831 least every 6 months and must hold a permanency review hearing  
832 at least annually.

833 (a) The department and community-based care lead agency  
834 shall prepare and submit to the court a report, developed in  
835 collaboration with the young adult, which addresses the young  
836 adult's progress in meeting the goals in the case plan. The  
837 report must include progress information related to the young  
838 adult's independent living plan and transition plan, if  
839 applicable, and shall propose modifications as necessary to  
840 further the young adult's goals.

841 (b) The court shall attempt to determine whether the

20131036e2

842 department and any service provider under contract with the  
843 department are providing the appropriate services as provided in  
844 the case plan.

845 (c) If the court believes that the young adult is entitled  
846 under department policy or under a contract with a service  
847 provider to additional services to achieve the goals enumerated  
848 in the case plan, it may order the department to take action to  
849 ensure that the young adult receives the identified services.

850 (d) The young adult or any other party to the dependency  
851 case may request an additional hearing or judicial review.

852 (e) Notwithstanding the provisions of this subsection, if a  
853 young adult has chosen to remain in extended foster care after  
854 he or she has reached 18 years of age, the department may not  
855 close a case and the court may not terminate jurisdiction until  
856 the court finds, following a hearing, that the following  
857 criteria have been met:

858 1. Attendance of the young adult at the hearing; or

859 2. Findings by the court that:

860 a. The young adult has been informed by the department of  
861 his or her right to attend the hearing and has provided written  
862 consent to waive this right; and

863 b. The young adult has been informed of the potential  
864 negative effects of early termination of care, the option to  
865 reenter care before reaching 21 years of age, the procedure for,  
866 and limitations on, reentering care, and the availability of  
867 alternative services, and has signed a document attesting that  
868 he or she has been so informed and understands these provisions;  
869 or

870 c. The young adult has voluntarily left the program, has

20131036e2

871 not signed the document in sub-subparagraph b., and is unwilling  
872 to participate in any further court proceeding.

873 3. In all permanency hearings or hearings regarding the  
874 transition of the young adult from care to independent living,  
875 the court shall consult with the young adult regarding the  
876 proposed permanency plan, case plan, and individual education  
877 plan for the young adult and ensure that he or she has  
878 understood the conversation.

879 Section 7. Section 409.145, Florida Statutes, is amended to  
880 read:

881 409.145 Care of children; quality parenting; "reasonable  
882 and prudent parent" standard.~~The child welfare system of the~~  
883 department shall operate as a coordinated community-based system  
884 of care which empowers all caregivers for children in foster  
885 care to provide quality parenting, including approving or  
886 disapproving a child's participation in activities based on the  
887 caregiver's assessment using the "reasonable and prudent parent"  
888 standard.

889 (1) SYSTEM OF CARE.~~The department shall develop, implement~~  
890 ~~conduct, supervise, and administer a~~ coordinated community-based  
891 system of care program ~~for dependent children who are found to~~  
892 be dependent and their families. This system of care must ~~The~~  
893 ~~services of the department are to be directed toward the~~  
894 following goals:

895 (a) ~~The~~ Prevention of separation of children from their  
896 families.

897 (b) Intervention to allow children to remain safely in  
898 their own homes.

899 (c) ~~(b)~~ The Reunification of families who have had children

20131036e2

900 ~~removed from their care placed in foster homes or institutions.~~

901 (d) Safety for children who are separated from their  
902 families by providing alternative emergency or longer-term  
903 parenting arrangements.

904 (e) Focus on the well-being of children through emphasis on  
905 maintaining educational stability and providing timely health  
906 care.

907 ~~(f)~~ (e) Permanency for ~~The permanent placement of children~~  
908 ~~for whom reunification who cannot be reunited with their~~  
909 ~~families is not possible or when reunification would is not be~~  
910 ~~in the best interest of the child.~~

911 ~~(d) The protection of dependent children or children~~  
912 ~~alleged to be dependent, including provision of emergency and~~  
913 ~~long-term alternate living arrangements.~~

914 ~~(g)~~ (e) The transition to independence and self-sufficiency  
915 for older children who remain in foster care through adolescence  
916 ~~continue to be in foster care as adolescents.~~

917 ~~(2) The following dependent children shall be subject to~~  
918 ~~the protection, care, guidance, and supervision of the~~  
919 ~~department or any duly licensed public or private agency:~~

920 ~~(a) Any child who has been temporarily or permanently taken~~  
921 ~~from the custody of the parents, custodians, or guardians in~~  
922 ~~accordance with those provisions in chapter 39 that relate to~~  
923 ~~dependent children.~~

924 ~~(b) Any child who is in need of the protective supervision~~  
925 ~~of the department as determined by intake or by the court in~~  
926 ~~accordance with those provisions of chapter 39 that relate to~~  
927 ~~dependent children.~~

928 ~~(c) Any child who is voluntarily placed, with the written~~



20131036e2

929 ~~consent of the parents or guardians, in the department's foster~~  
930 ~~care program or the foster care program of a licensed private~~  
931 ~~agency.~~

932 ~~(3) The circuit courts exercising juvenile jurisdiction in~~  
933 ~~the various counties of this state shall cooperate with the~~  
934 ~~department and its employees in carrying out the purposes and~~  
935 ~~intent of this chapter.~~

936 ~~(4) The department is authorized to accept children on a~~  
937 ~~permanent placement basis by order of a court of competent~~  
938 ~~jurisdiction for the single purpose of adoption placement of~~  
939 ~~these children. The department is authorized to provide the~~  
940 ~~necessary services to place these children ordered to the~~  
941 ~~department on a permanent placement basis for adoption.~~

942 ~~(5) Any funds appropriated by counties for child welfare~~  
943 ~~services may be matched by state and federal funds, such funds~~  
944 ~~to be utilized by the department for the benefit of children in~~  
945 ~~those counties.~~

946 ~~(6) Whenever any child is placed under the protection,~~  
947 ~~care, and guidance of the department or a duly licensed public~~  
948 ~~or private agency, or as soon thereafter as is practicable, the~~  
949 ~~department or agency, as the case may be, shall endeavor to~~  
950 ~~obtain such information concerning the family medical history of~~  
951 ~~the child and the natural parents as is available or readily~~  
952 ~~obtainable. This information shall be kept on file by the~~  
953 ~~department or agency for possible future use as provided in ss.~~  
954 ~~63.082 and 63.162 or as may be otherwise provided by law.~~

955 ~~(7) Whenever any child is placed by the department in a~~  
956 ~~shelter home, foster home, or other residential placement, the~~  
957 ~~department shall make available to the operator of the shelter~~

20131036e2

958 ~~home, foster home, other residential placement, or other~~  
959 ~~caretaker as soon thereafter as is practicable, all relevant~~  
960 ~~information concerning the child's demographic, social, and~~  
961 ~~medical history.~~

962 (2) QUALITY PARENTING.—A child in foster care shall be  
963 placed only with a caregiver who has the ability to care for the  
964 child, is willing to accept responsibility for providing care,  
965 and is willing and able to learn about and be respectful of the  
966 child's culture, religion and ethnicity, special physical or  
967 psychological needs, any circumstances unique to the child, and  
968 family relationships. The department, the community-based care  
969 lead agency, and other agencies shall provide such caregiver  
970 with all available information necessary to assist the caregiver  
971 in determining whether he or she is able to appropriately care  
972 for a particular child.

973 (a) Roles and responsibilities of caregivers.—A caregiver  
974 shall:

975 1. Participate in developing the case plan for the child  
976 and his or her family and work with others involved in his or  
977 her care to implement this plan. This participation includes the  
978 caregiver's involvement in all team meetings or court hearings  
979 related to the child's care.

980 2. Complete all training needed to improve skills in  
981 parenting a child who has experienced trauma due to neglect,  
982 abuse, or separation from home, to meet the child's special  
983 needs, and to work effectively with child welfare agencies, the  
984 court, the schools, and other community and governmental  
985 agencies.

986 3. Respect and support the child's ties to members of his

20131036e2

987 or her biological family and assist the child in maintaining  
988 allowable visitation and other forms of communication.

989 4. Effectively advocate for the child in the caregiver's  
990 care with the child welfare system, the court, and community  
991 agencies, including the school, child care, health and mental  
992 health providers, and employers.

993 5. Participate fully in the child's medical, psychological,  
994 and dental care as the caregiver would for his or her biological  
995 child.

996 6. Support the child's school success by participating in  
997 school activities and meetings, including Individual Education  
998 Plan meetings, assisting with school assignments, supporting  
999 tutoring programs, meeting with teachers and working with an  
1000 educational surrogate if one has been appointed, and encouraging  
1001 the child's participation in extracurricular activities.

1002 7. Work in partnership with other stakeholders to obtain  
1003 and maintain records that are important to the child's well-  
1004 being, including child resource records, medical records, school  
1005 records, photographs, and records of special events and  
1006 achievements.

1007 8. Ensure that the child in the caregiver's care who is  
1008 between 13 and 17 years of age learns and masters independent  
1009 living skills.

1010 9. Ensure that the child in the caregiver's care is aware  
1011 of the requirements and benefits of the Road-to-Independence  
1012 Program.

1013 10. Work to enable the child in the caregiver's care to  
1014 establish and maintain naturally occurring mentoring  
1015 relationships.

20131036e2

1016 (b) Roles and responsibilities of the department, the  
1017 community-based care lead agency, and other agency staff.—The  
1018 department, the community-based care lead agency, and other  
1019 agency staff shall:

1020 1. Include a caregiver in the development and  
1021 implementation of the case plan for the child and his or her  
1022 family. The caregiver shall be authorized to participate in all  
1023 team meetings or court hearings related to the child's care and  
1024 future plans. The caregiver's participation shall be facilitated  
1025 through timely notification, an inclusive process, and  
1026 alternative methods for participation for a caregiver who cannot  
1027 be physically present.

1028 2. Develop and make available to the caregiver the  
1029 information, services, training, and support that the caregiver  
1030 needs to improve his or her skills in parenting children who  
1031 have experienced trauma due to neglect, abuse, or separation  
1032 from home, to meet these children's special needs and to  
1033 advocate effectively with child welfare agencies, the courts,  
1034 schools, and other community and governmental agencies.

1035 3. Provide the caregiver with all information related to  
1036 services and other benefits that are available to the child.

1037 (c) Transitions.—

1038 1. Once a caregiver accepts the responsibility of caring  
1039 for a child, the child will be removed from the home of that  
1040 caregiver only if:

1041 a. The caregiver is clearly unable to safely or legally  
1042 care for the child;

1043 b. The child and his or her biological family are  
1044 reunified;

20131036e2

1045 c. The child is being placed in a legally permanent home  
1046 pursuant to the case plan or a court order; or

1047 d. The removal is demonstrably in the child's best  
1048 interest.

1049 2. In the absence of an emergency, if a child leaves the  
1050 caregiver's home for a reason provided under subparagraph 1.,  
1051 the transition must be accomplished according to a plan that  
1052 involves cooperation and sharing of information among all  
1053 persons involved, respects the child's developmental stage and  
1054 psychological needs, ensures the child has all of his or her  
1055 belongings, allows for a gradual transition from the caregiver's  
1056 home and, if possible, for continued contact with the caregiver  
1057 after the child leaves.

1058 (d) Information sharing.—Whenever a foster home or  
1059 residential group home assumes responsibility for the care of a  
1060 child, the department and any additional providers shall make  
1061 available to the caregiver as soon as is practicable all  
1062 relevant information concerning the child. Records and  
1063 information that are required to be shared with caregivers  
1064 include, but are not limited to:

1065 1. Medical, dental, psychological, psychiatric, and  
1066 behavioral history, as well as ongoing evaluation or treatment  
1067 needs;

1068 2. School records;

1069 3. Copies of his or her birth certificate and, if  
1070 appropriate, immigration status documents;

1071 4. Consents signed by parents;

1072 5. Comprehensive behavioral assessments and other social  
1073 assessments;

20131036e2

1074 6. Court orders;

1075 7. Visitation and case plans;

1076 8. Guardian ad litem reports;

1077 9. Staffing forms; and

1078 10. Judicial or citizen review panel reports and  
1079 attachments filed with the court, except confidential medical,  
1080 psychiatric, and psychological information regarding any party  
1081 or participant other than the child.

1082 (e) Caregivers employed by residential group homes.-All  
1083 caregivers in residential group homes shall meet the same  
1084 education, training, and background and other screening  
1085 requirements as foster parents.

1086 (3) REASONABLE AND PRUDENT PARENT STANDARD.-

1087 (a) Definitions.-As used in this subsection, the term:

1088 1. "Age-appropriate" means an activity or item that is  
1089 generally accepted as suitable for a child of the same  
1090 chronological age or level of maturity. Age appropriateness is  
1091 based on the development of cognitive, emotional, physical, and  
1092 behavioral capacity which is typical for an age or age group.

1093 2. "Caregiver" means a person with whom the child is placed  
1094 in out-of-home care, or a designated official for a group care  
1095 facility licensed by the department under s. 409.175.

1096 3. "Reasonable and prudent parent" standard means the  
1097 standard of care used by a caregiver in determining whether to  
1098 allow a child in his or her care to participate in  
1099 extracurricular, enrichment, and social activities. This  
1100 standard is characterized by careful and thoughtful parental  
1101 decisionmaking that is intended to maintain a child's health,  
1102 safety, and best interest while encouraging the child's

20131036e2

1103 emotional and developmental growth.

1104 (b) Application of standard of care.—

1105 1. Every child who comes into out-of-home care pursuant to  
1106 this chapter is entitled to participate in age-appropriate  
1107 extracurricular, enrichment, and social activities.

1108 2. Each caregiver shall use the reasonable and prudent  
1109 parent standard in determining whether to give permission for a  
1110 child living in out-of-home care to participate in  
1111 extracurricular, enrichment, or social activities. When using  
1112 the reasonable and prudent parent standard, the caregiver must  
1113 consider:

1114 a. The child's age, maturity, and developmental level to  
1115 maintain the overall health and safety of the child.

1116 b. The potential risk factors and the appropriateness of  
1117 the extracurricular, enrichment, or social activity.

1118 c. The best interest of the child, based on information  
1119 known by the caregiver.

1120 d. The importance of encouraging the child's emotional and  
1121 developmental growth.

1122 e. The importance of providing the child with the most  
1123 family-like living experience possible.

1124 f. The behavioral history of the child and the child's  
1125 ability to safely participate in the proposed activity.

1126 (c) Verification of services delivered.—The department and  
1127 each community-based care lead agency shall verify that private  
1128 agencies providing out-of-home care services to dependent  
1129 children have policies in place which are consistent with this  
1130 section and that these agencies promote and protect the ability  
1131 of dependent children to participate in age-appropriate

20131036e2

1132 extracurricular, enrichment, and social activities.

1133 (d) Limitation of liability.—A caregiver is not liable for  
 1134 harm caused to a child who participates in an activity approved  
 1135 by the caregiver, provided that the caregiver has acted in  
 1136 accordance with the reasonable and prudent parent standard. This  
 1137 paragraph may not be interpreted as removing or limiting any  
 1138 existing liability protection afforded by law.

1139 (4) FOSTER PARENT ROOM AND BOARD RATES.—

1140 (a) Effective January 1, 2014, room and board rates paid to  
 1141 foster parents are as follows:

1142

<u>Monthly Foster</u>	<u>0-5 Years Age</u>	<u>6-12 Years Age</u>	<u>13-21 Years Age</u>
<u>Care Rate</u>			
	<u>\$429</u>	<u>\$440</u>	<u>\$515</u>

1143

1144

1145

1146 (b) Foster parents shall receive an annual cost of living  
 1147 increase. The department shall calculate the new room and board  
 1148 rate increase equal to the percentage change in the Consumer  
 1149 Price Index for All Urban Consumers, U.S. City Average, All  
 1150 Items, not seasonally adjusted, or successor reports, for the  
 1151 preceding December compared to the prior December as initially  
 1152 reported by the United States Department of Labor, Bureau of  
 1153 Labor Statistics. The department shall make available the  
 1154 adjusted room and board rates annually.

1155 (c) The amount of the monthly foster care board rate may be  
 1156 increased upon agreement among the department, the community-  
 1157 based care lead agency, and the foster parent.



20131036e2

1158 (d) Community-based care lead agencies providing care under  
1159 contract with the department shall pay a supplemental room and  
1160 board payment to foster care parents for providing independent  
1161 life skills and normalcy supports to children who are 13 through  
1162 17 years of age placed in their care. The supplemental payment  
1163 shall be paid monthly to the foster care parents on a per-child  
1164 basis in addition to the current monthly room and board rate  
1165 payment. The supplemental monthly payment shall be based on 10  
1166 percent of the monthly room and board rate for children 13  
1167 through 21 years of age as provided under this section and  
1168 adjusted annually.

1169 (5) RULEMAKING.—The department shall adopt by rule  
1170 procedures to administer this section.

1171 Section 8. Section 409.1451, Florida Statutes, is amended  
1172 to read:

1173 (Substantial rewording of section. See  
1174 s. 409.1451, F.S., for present text).

1175 409.1451 The Road-to-Independence Program.—

1176 (1) LEGISLATIVE FINDINGS AND INTENT.—

1177 (a) The Legislature recognizes that most children and young  
1178 adults are resilient and, with adequate support, can expect to  
1179 be successful as independent adults. Not unlike many young  
1180 adults, some young adults who have lived in foster care need  
1181 additional support and resources for a period of time after  
1182 reaching 18 years of age.

1183 (b) The Legislature finds that while it is important to  
1184 provide young adults who have lived in foster care with  
1185 education and independent living skills, there is also a need to  
1186 focus more broadly on creating and preserving family

20131036e2

1187 relationships so that young adults have a permanent connection  
1188 with at least one committed adult who provides a safe and stable  
1189 parenting relationship.

1190 (c) It is the intent of the Legislature that young adults  
1191 who choose to participate in the program receive the skills,  
1192 education, and support necessary to become self-sufficient and  
1193 leave foster care with a lifelong connection to a supportive  
1194 adult through the Road-to-Independence Program, either through  
1195 postsecondary education services and support, as provided in  
1196 subsection (2), or aftercare services.

1197 (2) POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION SERVICES AND SUPPORT.—

1198 (a) A young adult is eligible for services and support  
1199 under this subsection if he or she:

1200 1. Was living in licensed care on his or her 18th birthday  
1201 or is currently living in licensed care; or was at least 16  
1202 years of age and was adopted from foster care or placed with a  
1203 court-approved dependency guardian after spending at least 6  
1204 months in licensed care within the 12 months immediately  
1205 preceding such placement or adoption;

1206 2. Spent at least 6 months in licensed care before reaching  
1207 his or her 18th birthday;

1208 3. Earned a standard high school diploma or its equivalent  
1209 pursuant to s. 1003.428, s. 1003.4281, s. 1003.429, s. 1003.43,  
1210 s. 1003.435, or s. 1003.438;

1211 4. Has been admitted for enrollment as a full-time student  
1212 or its equivalent in an eligible postsecondary educational  
1213 institution as provided in s. 1009.533. For purposes of this  
1214 section, the term "full-time" means 9 credit hours or the  
1215 vocational school equivalent. A student may enroll part-time if

20131036e2

1216 he or she has a recognized disability or is faced with another  
1217 challenge or circumstance that would prevent full-time  
1218 attendance. A student needing to enroll part-time for any reason  
1219 other than having a recognized disability must get approval from  
1220 his or her academic advisor;

1221 5. Has reached 18 years of age but is not yet 23 years of  
1222 age;

1223 6. Has applied, with assistance from the young adult's  
1224 caregiver and the community-based lead agency, for any other  
1225 grants and scholarships for which he or she may qualify;

1226 7. Submitted a Free Application for Federal Student Aid  
1227 which is complete and error free; and

1228 8. Signed an agreement to allow the department and the  
1229 community-based care lead agency access to school records.

1230 (b) The amount of the financial assistance shall be as  
1231 follows:

1232 1. For a young adult who does not remain in foster care and  
1233 is attending a postsecondary school as provided in s. 1009.533,  
1234 the amount is \$1,256 monthly.

1235 2. For a young adult who remains in foster care, is  
1236 attending a postsecondary school, as provided in s. 1009.533,  
1237 and continues to reside in a licensed foster home, the amount is  
1238 the established room and board rate for foster parents. This  
1239 takes the place of the payment provided for in s. 409.145(4).

1240 3. For a young adult who remains in foster care, but  
1241 temporarily resides away from a licensed foster home for  
1242 purposes of attending a postsecondary school as provided in s.  
1243 1009.533, the amount is \$1,256 monthly. This takes the place of  
1244 the payment provided for in s. 409.145(4).

20131036e2

1245 4. For a young adult who remains in foster care, is  
1246 attending a postsecondary school as provided in s. 1009.533, and  
1247 continues to reside in a licensed group home, the amount is  
1248 negotiated between the community-based care lead agency and the  
1249 licensed group home provider.

1250 5. For a young adult who remains in foster care, but  
1251 temporarily resides away from a licensed group home for purposes  
1252 of attending a postsecondary school as provided in s. 1009.533,  
1253 the amount is \$1,256 monthly. This takes the place of a  
1254 negotiated room and board rate.

1255 6. The amount of the award may be disregarded for purposes  
1256 of determining the eligibility for, or the amount of, any other  
1257 federal or federally supported assistance.

1258 7. A young adult is eligible to receive financial  
1259 assistance during the months when enrolled in a postsecondary  
1260 educational institution.

1261 (c) Payment of financial assistance for a young adult who:

1262 1. Has chosen not to remain in foster care and is attending  
1263 a postsecondary school as provided in s. 1009.533, shall be made  
1264 to the community-based care lead agency in order to secure  
1265 housing and utilities, with the balance being paid directly to  
1266 the young adult until such time the lead agency and the young  
1267 adult determine that the young adult can successfully manage the  
1268 full amount of the assistance.

1269 2. Has remained in foster care under s. 39.6251 and who is  
1270 attending postsecondary school as provided in s. 1009.533, shall  
1271 be made directly to the foster parent or group home provider.

1272 3. Community-based care lead agencies or other contracted  
1273 providers are prohibited from charging a fee associated with

20131036e2

1274 administering the Road-to-Independence payments.

1275 (d)1. The department must advertise the availability of the  
1276 stipend and must provide notification of the criteria and  
1277 application procedures for the stipend to children and young  
1278 adults leaving, or who were formerly in, foster care;  
1279 caregivers; case managers; guidance and family services  
1280 counselors; principals or other relevant school administrators;  
1281 and guardians ad litem.

1282 2. If the award recipient transfers from one eligible  
1283 institution to another and continues to meet eligibility  
1284 requirements, the award shall be transferred with the recipient.

1285 3. The department, or an agency under contract with the  
1286 department, shall evaluate each Road-to-Independence award for  
1287 renewal eligibility on an annual basis. In order to be eligible  
1288 for a renewal award for the subsequent year, the young adult  
1289 must:

1290 a. Be enrolled for or have completed the number of hours,  
1291 or the equivalent, to be considered a full-time student under  
1292 subparagraph (a)4., unless the young adult qualifies for an  
1293 exception under subparagraph (a)4.

1294 b. Maintain standards of academic progress as defined by  
1295 the education institution, except that if the young adult's  
1296 progress is insufficient to renew the award at any time during  
1297 the eligibility period, the young adult may continue to be  
1298 enrolled for additional terms while attempting to restore  
1299 eligibility as long as progress towards the required level is  
1300 maintained.

1301 4. Funds may be terminated during the interim between an  
1302 award and the evaluation for a renewal award if the department,

20131036e2

1303 or an agency under contract with the department, determines that  
1304 the award recipient is no longer enrolled in an educational  
1305 institution as described in subparagraph (a)4. or is no longer a  
1306 resident of this state.

1307 5. The department, or an agency under contract with the  
1308 department, shall notify a recipient who is terminated and  
1309 inform the recipient of his or her right to appeal.

1310 6. An award recipient who does not qualify for a renewal  
1311 award or who chooses not to renew the award may apply for  
1312 reinstatement. An application for reinstatement must be made  
1313 before the young adult reaches 23 years of age. In order to be  
1314 eligible for reinstatement, the young adult must meet the  
1315 eligibility criteria and the criteria for award renewal for the  
1316 program.

1317 (3) AFTERCARE SERVICES.—

1318 (a) Aftercare services are available to a young adult who  
1319 has reached 18 years of age but is not yet 23 years of age and  
1320 is:

1321 1. Not in foster care.

1322 2. Temporarily not receiving financial assistance under  
1323 subsection (2) to pursue postsecondary education.

1324 (b) Aftercare services include, but are not limited to, the  
1325 following:

1326 1. Mentoring and tutoring.

1327 2. Mental health services and substance abuse counseling.

1328 3. Life skills classes, including credit management and  
1329 preventive health activities.

1330 4. Parenting classes.

1331 5. Job and career skills training.

20131036e2

1332 6. Counselor consultations.

1333 7. Temporary financial assistance for necessities,  
1334 including, but not limited to, education supplies,  
1335 transportation expenses, security deposits for rent and  
1336 utilities, furnishings, household goods, and other basic living  
1337 expenses.

1338 8. Financial literacy skills training.

1339  
1340 The specific services to be provided under this paragraph shall  
1341 be determined by an assessment of the young adult and may be  
1342 provided by the community-based care provider or through  
1343 referrals in the community.

1344 (c) Temporary assistance provided to prevent homelessness  
1345 shall be provided as expeditiously as possible and within the  
1346 limitations defined by the department.

1347 (4) APPEALS PROCESS.—

1348 (a) The department shall have a procedure by which a young  
1349 adult may appeal the department's refusal to provide Road-to-  
1350 Independence Program services or support, or the termination of  
1351 such services or support if funds for such services or support  
1352 are available.

1353 (b) The appeal procedure must be readily accessible to  
1354 young adults, must provide for timely decisions, and must  
1355 provide for an appeal to the department. The decision of the  
1356 department constitutes final agency action and is reviewable by  
1357 the court as provided in s. 120.68.

1358 (5) PORTABILITY.—The services provided under this section  
1359 are portable across county lines and between lead agencies.

1360 (a) The service needs that are identified in the original

20131036e2

1361 or updated transition plan, pursuant to s. 39.6035, shall be  
1362 provided by the lead agency where the young adult is currently  
1363 residing but shall be funded by the lead agency who initiated  
1364 the transition plan.

1365 (b) The lead agency with primary case management  
1366 responsibilities shall provide maintenance payments, case  
1367 planning, including a written description of all services that  
1368 will assist a child 16 years of age or older in preparing for  
1369 the transition from care to independence, as well as regular  
1370 case reviews that conform with all federal scheduling and  
1371 content requirements, for all children in foster care who are  
1372 placed or visiting out-of-state.

1373 (6) ACCOUNTABILITY.—The department shall develop outcome  
1374 measures for the program and other performance measures in order  
1375 to maintain oversight of the program. No later than January 31  
1376 of each year, the department shall prepare a report on the  
1377 outcome measures and the department's oversight activities and  
1378 submit the report to the President of the Senate, the Speaker of  
1379 the House of Representatives, and the committees with  
1380 jurisdiction over issues relating to children and families in  
1381 the Senate and the House of Representatives. The report must  
1382 include:

1383 (a) An analysis of performance on the outcome measures  
1384 developed under this section reported for each community-based  
1385 care lead agency and compared with the performance of the  
1386 department on the same measures.

1387 (b) A description of the department's oversight of the  
1388 program, including, by lead agency, any programmatic or fiscal  
1389 deficiencies found, corrective actions required, and current



20131036e2

1390 status of compliance.

1391 (c) Any rules adopted or proposed under this section since  
1392 the last report. For the purposes of the first report, any rules  
1393 adopted or proposed under this section must be included.

1394 (7) INDEPENDENT LIVING SERVICES ADVISORY COUNCIL.—The  
1395 secretary shall establish the Independent Living Services  
1396 Advisory Council for the purpose of reviewing and making  
1397 recommendations concerning the implementation and operation of  
1398 the provisions of s. 39.6015 and the Road-to-Independence  
1399 Program. The advisory council shall function as specified in  
1400 this subsection until the Legislature determines that the  
1401 advisory council can no longer provide a valuable contribution  
1402 to the department's efforts to achieve the goals of the services  
1403 designed to enable a young adult to live independently.

1404 (a) The advisory council shall assess the implementation  
1405 and operation of the Road-to-Independence Program and advise the  
1406 department on actions that would improve the ability of these  
1407 Road-to-Independence Program services to meet the established  
1408 goals. The advisory council shall keep the department informed  
1409 of problems being experienced with the services, barriers to the  
1410 effective and efficient integration of services and support  
1411 across systems, and successes that the system of services has  
1412 achieved. The department shall consider, but is not required to  
1413 implement, the recommendations of the advisory council.

1414 (b) The advisory council shall report to the secretary on  
1415 the status of the implementation of the Road-To-Independence  
1416 Program, efforts to publicize the availability of the Road-to-  
1417 Independence Program, the success of the services, problems  
1418 identified, recommendations for department or legislative

20131036e2

1419 action, and the department's implementation of the  
1420 recommendations contained in the Independent Living Services  
1421 Integration Workgroup Report submitted to the appropriate  
1422 substantive committees of the Legislature by December 31, 2013.  
1423 The department shall submit a report by December 31 of each year  
1424 to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of  
1425 the House of Representatives which includes a summary of the  
1426 factors reported on by the council and identifies the  
1427 recommendations of the advisory council and either describes the  
1428 department's actions to implement the recommendations or  
1429 provides the department's rationale for not implementing the  
1430 recommendations.

1431 (c) Members of the advisory council shall be appointed by  
1432 the secretary of the department. The membership of the advisory  
1433 council must include, at a minimum, representatives from the  
1434 headquarters and regional offices of the Department of Children  
1435 and Families, community-based care lead agencies, the Department  
1436 of Juvenile Justice, the Department of Economic Opportunity, the  
1437 Department of Education, the Agency for Health Care  
1438 Administration, the State Youth Advisory Board, Workforce  
1439 Florida, Inc., the Statewide Guardian Ad Litem Office, foster  
1440 parents, recipients of services and funding through the Road-to-  
1441 Independence Program, and advocates for children in care. The  
1442 secretary shall determine the length of the term to be served by  
1443 each member appointed to the advisory council, which may not  
1444 exceed 4 years.

1445 (d) The department shall provide administrative support to  
1446 the Independent Living Services Advisory Council to accomplish  
1447 its assigned tasks. The advisory council shall be afforded

20131036e2

1448 access to all appropriate data from the department, each  
1449 community-based care lead agency, and other relevant agencies in  
1450 order to accomplish the tasks set forth in this section. The  
1451 data collected may not include any information that would  
1452 identify a specific child or young adult.

1453 (e) The advisory council report required under paragraph  
1454 (b), must include an analysis of the system of independent  
1455 living transition services for young adults who reach 18 years  
1456 of age while in foster care before completing high school or its  
1457 equivalent and recommendations for department or legislative  
1458 action. The council shall assess and report on the most  
1459 effective method of assisting these young adults to complete  
1460 high school or its equivalent by examining the practices of  
1461 other states.

1462 (8) PERSONAL PROPERTY.—Property acquired on behalf of a  
1463 young adult in this program shall become the personal property  
1464 of the young adult and is not subject to the requirements of  
1465 chapter 273 relating to state-owned tangible personal property.  
1466 Such property continues to be subject to applicable federal  
1467 laws.

1468 (9) MEDICAL ASSISTANCE FOR YOUNG ADULTS FORMERLY IN CARE.—  
1469 The department or community-based care lead agency shall  
1470 document that eligible young adults are enrolled in Medicaid  
1471 under s. 409.903(4).

1472 (10) RULEMAKING.—The department shall adopt rules to  
1473 administer this section.

1474 Section 9. Paragraph (a) of subsection (3) of section  
1475 409.175, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

1476 409.175 Licensure of family foster homes, residential

20131036e2

1477 child-caring agencies, and child-placing agencies; public  
1478 records exemption.—

1479 (3) (a) The total number of children placed in each family  
1480 foster home shall be based on the recommendation of the  
1481 department, or the community-based care lead agency where one is  
1482 providing foster care and related services, based on the needs  
1483 of each child in care, the ability of the foster family to meet  
1484 the individual needs of each child, including any adoptive or  
1485 biological children or young adults remaining in foster care  
1486 living in the home, the amount of safe physical plant space, the  
1487 ratio of active and appropriate adult supervision, and the  
1488 background, experience, and skill of the family foster parents.

1489 Section 10. Subsection (4) of section 409.903, Florida  
1490 Statutes, is amended to read:

1491 409.903 Mandatory payments for eligible persons.—The agency  
1492 shall make payments for medical assistance and related services  
1493 on behalf of the following persons who the department, or the  
1494 Social Security Administration by contract with the Department  
1495 of Children and Family Services, determines to be eligible,  
1496 subject to the income, assets, and categorical eligibility tests  
1497 set forth in federal and state law. Payment on behalf of these  
1498 Medicaid eligible persons is subject to the availability of  
1499 moneys and any limitations established by the General  
1500 Appropriations Act or chapter 216.

1501 (4) A child who is eligible under Title IV-E of the Social  
1502 Security Act for subsidized board payments, foster care, or  
1503 adoption subsidies, and a child for whom the state has assumed  
1504 temporary or permanent responsibility and who does not qualify  
1505 for Title IV-E assistance but is in foster care, shelter or

20131036e2

1506 emergency shelter care, or subsidized adoption. This category  
1507 includes a young adult who is eligible to receive services under  
1508 s. 409.1451~~(5)~~, until the young adult reaches 21 years of age,  
1509 without regard to any income, resource, or categorical  
1510 eligibility test that is otherwise required. This category also  
1511 includes a person who as a child was eligible under Title IV-E  
1512 of the Social Security Act for foster care or the state-provided  
1513 foster care and who is a participant in the Road-to-Independence  
1514 Program.

1515       Section 11. Effective July 1, 2013, the Department of  
1516 Children and Families shall work in collaboration with the Board  
1517 of Governors, the Florida College System, and the Department of  
1518 Education to help address the need for a comprehensive support  
1519 structure in the academic arena to assist children and young  
1520 adults who have been or continue to remain in the foster care  
1521 system in making the transition from a structured care system  
1522 into an independent living setting. The State University System  
1523 of Florida and the Florida College System shall provide  
1524 postsecondary educational campus coaching positions that will be  
1525 integrated into Florida College System institutions' and  
1526 university institutions' general support services structure to  
1527 provide current and former foster care children and young adults  
1528 with dedicated, on-campus support. The Department of Children  
1529 and Families has the sole discretion to determine which state  
1530 college or university will offer a campus coaching position,  
1531 based on departmental demographic data indicating greatest need.  
1532 These campus coaching positions shall be employees of the  
1533 selected educational institutions, focused on supporting  
1534 children and young adults who have been or continue to remain in

20131036e2

1535 the foster care system. The Chancellors of the Florida College  
1536 System and the Board of Governors shall report annually to the  
1537 Department of Children and Families specific data, subject to  
1538 privacy laws, about the children and young adults served by the  
1539 campus coaches, including academic progress, retention rates for  
1540 students enrolled in the program, financial aid requested and  
1541 received, and information required by the National Youth in  
1542 Transition Database.

1543       Section 12. Effective January 1, 2014, a child or young  
1544 adult who is a participant in the program shall transfer to the  
1545 program services provided in this act, and his or her monthly  
1546 stipend may not be reduced, the method of payment of the monthly  
1547 stipend may not be changed, and the young adult may not be  
1548 required to change his or her living arrangement. These  
1549 conditions shall remain in effect for a child or young adult  
1550 until he or she ceases to meet the eligibility requirements  
1551 under which he or she entered the Road-to-Independence Program.  
1552 A child or young adult applying or reapplying for the Road-to-  
1553 Independence Program on or after January 1, 2014, may apply for  
1554 program services only as provided in this act.

1555       Section 13. The Department of Children and Families in  
1556 collaboration with the Florida Foster and Adoptive Parent  
1557 Association and the Quality Parenting Initiative will design and  
1558 disseminate training for caregivers on skill building on the  
1559 life skills necessary for youth in the foster care system.

1560       Section 14. This act shall take effect January 1, 2014.