

Amendment No.

COMMITTEE/SUBCOMMITTEE ACTION

ADOPTED _____ (Y/N)
ADOPTED AS AMENDED _____ (Y/N)
ADOPTED W/O OBJECTION _____ (Y/N)
FAILED TO ADOPT _____ (Y/N)
WITHDRAWN _____ (Y/N)
OTHER _____

1 Committee/Subcommittee hearing bill: Civil Justice & Claims
2 Subcommittee

3 Representative Payne offered the following:

4
5 **Amendment (with title amendment)**

6 Remove everything after the enacting clause and insert:

7
8 Section 1. Section 39.01304, Florida Statutes, is created
9 to read:

10 39.01304 Early Childhood Court program.-

11 (1) LEGISLATIVE FINDINGS AND INTENT.-

12 (a) The Legislature finds that a child's first 1,000 days
13 of life are a critical period during which he or she faces
14 either the greatest risk of having to endure lifelong adversity
15 or the greatest opportunity for long-term well-being with a
16 stable nurturing caregiver.

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17 (b) The Legislature also finds it is important to identify
18 evidence-based practices and developmentally appropriate
19 strategies to mitigate the impact of trauma on young children
20 placed in the state's dependency system and to improve outcomes
21 for them and their families.

22 (c) The Legislature further finds positive results
23 associated with the Safe Babies Court Team approach, advanced by
24 the national ZERO TO THREE nonprofit organization, which
25 achieves timely permanency, increases a child's well-being, and
26 greatly reduces recurrence of child abuse through the
27 development and use of specialized dockets, multidisciplinary
28 teams, community coordinators, and early childhood mental health
29 specialists who provide child-parent therapy to address the
30 multigenerational trauma.

31 (d) It is the intent of the Legislature to provide
32 resources to expand upon the existing specialized Early
33 Childhood Court dockets to ensure their adherence to the Safe
34 Babies Court Team approach. The Legislature also seeks to assess
35 the potential benefits to Florida's children and families from
36 adopting this approach, and determine whether expansion of the
37 Early Childhood Courts concept in this state is warranted.

38 (2) DEFINITIONS.—As used in this section, the term:

39 (a) "Community coordinator" means an individual who works
40 with a judge presiding over an Early Childhood Court, who
41 supports the activities of the court, and who facilitates

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42 coordination and collaboration among the members of the Early
43 Childhood Court team.

44 (b) "Early Childhood Court" means a program that has a
45 specialized court docket created under this section which is
46 modeled after the national ZERO TO THREE Safe Babies Court Team
47 approach and which addresses child welfare cases involving
48 children under 3 years of age.

49 (c) "Safe Babies Court Team" means a ZERO TO THREE
50 community engagement and systems change initiative focused on
51 improving how the courts, child welfare agencies, and related
52 child-serving organizations work together to improve and
53 expedite services for young children in out-of-home care.

54 (d) "ZERO TO THREE" means the national nonprofit
55 organization that informs, trains, and supports professionals,
56 policymakers, and parents in efforts to improve and promote the
57 health and development of children under 3 years of age.

58 (3) PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT.—

59 (a) By August 1, 2018, the Office of the State Courts
60 Administrator shall verify the existence of an Early Childhood
61 Court program at each circuit court site that established a
62 specialized Early Childhood Court docket before July 1, 2018.
63 Multiple program sites may exist in the same county. The Office
64 of the State Courts Administrator shall coordinate with the
65 appropriate circuit court to hire and train a full-time
66 community coordinator at each Early Childhood Court program site

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67 that was verified pursuant to this paragraph, and may hire a
68 statewide community coordinator to implement the program.

69 (b) The Florida State University Center for Prevention and
70 Early Intervention Policy shall hire a statewide clinical
71 director and assemble a clinical oversight team to ensure
72 quality, accountability, and fidelity to the Early Childhood
73 Court model, including, but not limited to, training and
74 technical assistance related to clinical services, clinical
75 consultation and guidance for difficult cases, ongoing clinical
76 training for court teams, and training in child-parent
77 psychotherapy to expand clinical capacity and support of the
78 professional development of clinicians at each Early Childhood
79 Court program site.

80 (4) GOALS.—The primary goal of the Early Childhood Court
81 program is to improve outcomes of children under 3 years of age
82 in Florida's child welfare system by doing all of the following:

83 (a) Improving child safety and well-being.

84 (b) Addressing parents' trauma-related conditions and
85 associated issues, including, but not limited to, substance
86 abuse, mental health concerns, and family violence, and
87 repairing relationships between parents and their children.

88 (c) Achieving timely permanency.

89 (d) Preventing recurrences of maltreatment.

90 (e) Ending the intergenerational cycle of abuse, neglect,
91 and violence.

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92 (5) CORE COMPONENTS.—The program shall be modeled after
93 the national ZERO TO THREE Safe Babies Court Team approach and
94 shall promote the adoption of its community engagement and
95 systems change initiatives to improve coordination between the
96 courts, child welfare agencies, and related organizations for
97 the benefit of children under 3 years of age placed in out-of-
98 home care. The program shall incorporate, but not be limited to,
99 all of the following core components of the Safe Babies Court
100 Team approach:

101 (a) An engaged and informed judge who leads the court team
102 in applying a therapeutic approach.

103 (b) Licensed mental health specialists who are trained in
104 Child-Parent Psychotherapy to heal trauma and help parents
105 become invested in their child's safety and well-being and who
106 play a prominent role in making recommendations to the judge and
107 the team regarding family progress and permanency for the child.

108 (c) An Early Childhood Court community coordinator who
109 works with the judge and the team to support Early Childhood
110 Court activities.

111 (6) TRAINING.—Within appropriated funds, the Office of the
112 State Courts Administrator, in partnership with the Florida
113 State University Center for Prevention and Early Intervention
114 Policy, shall provide training to the participating court teams
115 on meeting the program objectives.

116 (7) EVALUATION OF THE PROGRAM.—

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117 (a) In consultation with the department, the Office of the
118 State Courts Administrator, the Florida State University Center
119 for Prevention and Early Intervention Policy, and the ZERO TO
120 THREE organization, the Florida Institute for Child Welfare
121 established in s. 1004.615 shall evaluate the impact of the
122 Early Childhood Court program on children and families in
123 Florida's child welfare system.

124 (b) The evaluation must include the analysis of data
125 collected by the Office of the State Courts Administrator and
126 measurable outcomes, including, but not limited to, the impact
127 of the Early Childhood Courts program on the future incidence of
128 maltreatment of children whose cases were heard in Early
129 Childhood Court, timely permanency, reunification of families,
130 and incidents of children reentering the child welfare system
131 whose cases were heard in Early Childhood Court. The evaluation
132 must provide recommendations as to whether and how the program
133 should be expanded, the projected costs of such expansion, and
134 projected savings to the state resulting from the Early
135 Childhood Courts program.

136 (c) The institute shall submit the results of the
137 evaluation to the Governor, the President of the Senate, the
138 Speaker of the House of Representatives, and the Office of
139 Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability by October
140 1, 2021.

141 (8) ANNUAL REPORTS.—By December 1, 2019 and December 1,

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142 2020, the Florida Institute for Child Welfare shall provide
143 reports on the status of the program to the Governor, the
144 President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of
145 Representatives, and the Office of Program Policy Analysis and
146 Government Accountability.

147 Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2018.

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150 **T I T L E A M E N D M E N T**

151 Remove everything before the enacting clause and insert:

152 A bill to be entitled

153 An act relating to the Early Childhood Court program;
154 creating s. 39.01304, F.S.; providing legislative
155 findings and intent; defining terms; requiring the
156 Office of the State Courts Administrator, by a
157 specified date, to verify the existence of an Early
158 Childhood Court Program at certain circuit courts;
159 requiring the office to coordinate with the
160 appropriate circuit court to employ and train a
161 community coordinator for each program site;
162 authorizing the office to hire a statewide community
163 coordinator; requiring the Florida State University
164 Center for Prevention and Early Intervention Policy to
165 hire a statewide director and assemble a clinical
166 oversight team for specified purposes; establishing

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167 the primary goal of the program and the means of
168 achieving the goal; requiring that the program be
169 modeled on a specified approach for specified
170 purposes; requiring the program to incorporate
171 specified core components; requiring the office, in
172 partnership with the center and within appropriated
173 funds, to provide training to program court teams;
174 requiring the Florida Institute for Child Welfare to
175 conduct an evaluation of the program's impact in
176 consultation with the Department of Children and
177 Families, the office, the center, and a specified
178 organization; requiring the evaluation to include
179 certain data and recommendations; requiring the
180 institute to submit the results of its evaluation to
181 the Governor, the Legislature, and the Office of
182 Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability
183 by a specified date; requiring the institute to submit
184 annual reports; providing an effective date.