

By Senator Book

32-00589A-18

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1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to child-placing agencies; amending s.
3 409.175, F.S.; requiring the Department of Children
4 and Families to adopt or amend licensing rules for
5 child-placing agencies to include specific
6 requirements to prevent the separation of siblings;
7 providing an effective date.
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9 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:
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11 Section 1. Paragraphs (a), (b), and (d) of subsection (5)
12 of section 409.175, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

13 409.175 Licensure of family foster homes, residential
14 child-caring agencies, and child-placing agencies; public
15 records exemption.—

16 (5) (a) The department shall adopt and amend licensing rules
17 for family foster homes, residential child-caring agencies, and
18 child-placing agencies. The department may also adopt rules
19 relating to the screening requirements for summer day camps and
20 summer 24-hour camps. The requirements for licensure and
21 operation of family foster homes, residential child-caring
22 agencies, and child-placing agencies shall include:

23 1. The operation, conduct, and maintenance of these homes
24 and agencies and the responsibility which they assume for
25 children served and the evidence of need for that service.

26 2. The provision of food, clothing, educational
27 opportunities, services, equipment, and individual supplies to
28 assure the healthy physical, emotional, and mental development
29 of the children served.

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30 3. The appropriateness, safety, cleanliness, and general
31 adequacy of the premises, including fire prevention and health
32 standards, to provide for the physical comfort, care, and well-
33 being of the children served.

34 4. The ratio of staff to children required to provide
35 adequate care and supervision of the children served and, in the
36 case of foster homes, the maximum number of children in the
37 home.

38 5. The good moral character based upon screening,
39 education, training, and experience requirements for personnel.

40 ~~6.~~ The department may grant exemptions from
41 disqualification from working with children or the
42 developmentally disabled as provided in s. 435.07.

43 ~~6.7.~~ The provision of preservice and inservice training for
44 all foster parents and agency staff.

45 ~~7.8.~~ Satisfactory evidence of financial ability to provide
46 care for the children in compliance with licensing requirements.

47 ~~8.9.~~ The maintenance by the agency of records pertaining to
48 admission, progress, health, and discharge of children served,
49 including written case plans and reports to the department.

50 ~~9.10.~~ The provision for parental involvement to encourage
51 preservation and strengthening of a child's relationship with
52 the family.

53 ~~10.11.~~ The transportation safety of children served.

54 ~~11.12.~~ The provisions for safeguarding the cultural,
55 religious, and ethnic values of a child.

56 ~~12.13.~~ Provisions to safeguard the legal rights of children
57 served.

58 (b) The requirements for the licensure and operation of a

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59 child-placing agency shall also include:

60 1. Compliance with the requirements of ss. 63.0422 and
61 790.335; and

62 2. The following provisions to prevent the separation of
63 siblings:

64 a. Siblings must be placed in the same home whenever
65 possible. If it is not possible to place the siblings in the
66 same home, siblings may be placed on the same campus. All
67 efforts to place the siblings in the same home must be
68 documented in each child's record.

69 b. If a foster home is not able to accept all siblings, the
70 siblings must be placed in residential care. Siblings who are
71 placed in residential care and who are stable must remain in
72 such residential care until permanency can be attained.

73 (d) When adopting ~~In promulgating~~ licensing rules pursuant
74 to this section, the department may make distinctions among
75 types of care; numbers of children served; and the physical,
76 mental, emotional, and educational needs of the children to be
77 served by a home or agency.

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