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Proposed Committee Substitute by the Committee on Children,
Families, and Elder Affairs

1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to child welfare; providing a short
3 title; amending s. 39.303, F.S.; requiring Child
4 Protection Teams to be capable of providing certain
5 training relating to head trauma and brain injuries in
6 children younger than a specified age; amending s.
7 39.8296, F.S.; revising the membership of the
8 curriculum committee established to develop a
9 specified training program; requiring the training
10 program to include certain training relating to head
11 trauma and brain injuries in children younger than a
12 specified age; amending s. 402.40, F.S.; revising
13 legislative findings and providing legislative intent;
14 requiring the Department of Children and Families to
15 develop and implement a specified child welfare
16 workforce development framework in collaboration with
17 other specified entities; providing requirements for
18 the department relating to workforce education
19 requirements; requiring the department to submit an
20 annual report to the Governor and the Legislature by a
21 specified date; requiring community-based care lead
22 agencies to submit a plan and timeline to the
23 department relating to certain child welfare staff by
24 a specified date; providing requirements for the
25 department related to workforce training; providing
26 legislative findings; requiring the department to
27 establish an Office of Well-Being and Support;



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28 requiring the department to contract with certain
29 university-based centers to develop and coordinate the
30 implementation of a specified helpline; requiring the
31 department to submit a report on the implementation of
32 such helpline to the Governor and the Legislature on a
33 specified date; requiring certain attorneys employed
34 by the department to complete certain training by a
35 specified date; deleting definitions; deleting
36 provisions relating to core competencies and
37 specializations; amending s. 409.988, F.S.; requiring
38 a lead agency to ensure that certain individuals
39 receive specified training relating to head trauma and
40 brain injuries in children younger than a specified
41 age; revising the types of services a lead agency is
42 required to provide; creating s. 943.17298, F.S.;
43 requiring law enforcement officers to complete
44 training relating to head trauma and brain injuries in
45 children younger than a specified age as part of
46 either basic recruit training or continuing training
47 or education by a specified date; amending s.
48 1004.615, F.S.; revising the purpose of the Florida
49 Institute for Child Welfare; revising requirements for
50 the institute; revising the contents of the annual
51 report that the institute must provide to the Governor
52 and the Legislature; deleting obsolete provisions;
53 repealing s. 402.402, F.S., relating to child
54 protection and child welfare personnel and attorneys
55 employed by the department; amending ss. 402.731,
56 409.996, and 1009.25, F.S.; conforming provisions to



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57 changes made by the act; providing an effective date.

58
59 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

60
61 Section 1. This act may be cited as "Jordan's Law."

62 Section 2. Paragraph (h) of subsection (3) of section
63 39.303, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

64 39.303 Child Protection Teams and sexual abuse treatment
65 programs; services; eligible cases.—

66 (3) The Department of Health shall use and convene the
67 Child Protection Teams to supplement the assessment and
68 protective supervision activities of the family safety and
69 preservation program of the Department of Children and Families.
70 This section does not remove or reduce the duty and
71 responsibility of any person to report pursuant to this chapter
72 all suspected or actual cases of child abuse, abandonment, or
73 neglect or sexual abuse of a child. The role of the Child
74 Protection Teams is to support activities of the program and to
75 provide services deemed by the Child Protection Teams to be
76 necessary and appropriate to abused, abandoned, and neglected
77 children upon referral. The specialized diagnostic assessment,
78 evaluation, coordination, consultation, and other supportive
79 services that a Child Protection Team must be capable of
80 providing include, but are not limited to, the following:

81 (h) Such training services for program and other employees
82 of the Department of Children and Families, employees of the
83 Department of Health, and other medical professionals as is
84 deemed appropriate to enable them to develop and maintain their
85 professional skills and abilities in handling child abuse,



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86 abandonment, and neglect cases. The training services must
87 include training in the recognition of and appropriate responses
88 to head trauma and brain injury in a child under 6 years of age
89 as required under ss. 39.8296, 402.40, and 943.17298.

90

91 A Child Protection Team that is evaluating a report of medical
92 neglect and assessing the health care needs of a medically
93 complex child shall consult with a physician who has experience
94 in treating children with the same condition.

95 Section 3. Paragraph (b) of subsection (2) of section
96 39.8296, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

97 39.8296 Statewide Guardian Ad Litem Office; legislative
98 findings and intent; creation; appointment of executive
99 director; duties of office.—

100 (2) STATEWIDE GUARDIAN AD LITEM OFFICE.—There is created a
101 Statewide Guardian Ad Litem Office within the Justice
102 Administrative Commission. The Justice Administrative Commission
103 shall provide administrative support and service to the office
104 to the extent requested by the executive director within the
105 available resources of the commission. The Statewide Guardian Ad
106 Litem Office shall not be subject to control, supervision, or
107 direction by the Justice Administrative Commission in the
108 performance of its duties, but the employees of the office shall
109 be governed by the classification plan and salary and benefits
110 plan approved by the Justice Administrative Commission.

111 (b) The Statewide Guardian Ad Litem Office shall, within
112 available resources, have oversight responsibilities for and
113 provide technical assistance to all guardian ad litem and
114 attorney ad litem programs located within the judicial circuits.



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115 1. The office shall identify the resources required to
116 implement methods of collecting, reporting, and tracking
117 reliable and consistent case data.

118 2. The office shall review the current guardian ad litem
119 programs in Florida and other states.

120 3. The office, in consultation with local guardian ad litem
121 offices, shall develop statewide performance measures and
122 standards.

123 4. ~~The office shall develop a guardian ad litem training~~
124 ~~program.~~ The office shall establish a curriculum committee to
125 develop a guardian ad litem ~~the~~ training program ~~specified in~~
126 ~~this subparagraph.~~ The curriculum committee shall include, but
127 not be limited to, dependency judges, directors of circuit
128 guardian ad litem programs, active certified guardians ad litem,
129 a mental health professional who specializes in the treatment of
130 children, a member of a child advocacy group, a representative
131 of the Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence, an
132 individual with a degree in social work, and a social worker
133 experienced in working with victims and perpetrators of child
134 abuse. The training program must include training in the
135 recognition of and appropriate responses to head trauma and
136 brain injury in a child under 6 years of age developed by the
137 Child Protection Team Program within the Department of Health.

138 5. The office shall review the various methods of funding
139 guardian ad litem programs, shall maximize the use of those
140 funding sources to the extent possible, and shall review the
141 kinds of services being provided by circuit guardian ad litem
142 programs.

143 6. The office shall determine the feasibility or



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144 desirability of new concepts of organization, administration,
145 financing, or service delivery designed to preserve the civil
146 and constitutional rights and fulfill other needs of dependent
147 children.

148 7. In an effort to promote normalcy and establish trust
149 between a court-appointed volunteer guardian ad litem and a
150 child alleged to be abused, abandoned, or neglected under this
151 chapter, a guardian ad litem may transport a child. However, a
152 guardian ad litem volunteer may not be required or directed by
153 the program or a court to transport a child.

154 8. The office shall submit to the Governor, the President
155 of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and
156 the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court an interim report
157 describing the progress of the office in meeting the goals as
158 described in this section. The office shall submit to the
159 Governor, the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House
160 of Representatives, and the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court a
161 proposed plan including alternatives for meeting the state's
162 guardian ad litem and attorney ad litem needs. This plan may
163 include recommendations for less than the entire state, may
164 include a phase-in system, and shall include estimates of the
165 cost of each of the alternatives. Each year the office shall
166 provide a status report and provide further recommendations to
167 address the need for guardian ad litem services and related
168 issues.

169 Section 4. Section 402.40, Florida Statutes, is amended to
170 read:

171 (Substantial rewording of section. See
172 s. 402.40, F.S., for present text.)



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173 402.40 Child welfare workforce; development; training;
174 well-being.-

175 (1) LEGISLATIVE FINDINGS AND INTENT.-

176 (a) The Legislature finds that positive outcomes for
177 children and families involved with the child welfare system
178 often are attributable to the strong commitment of a well-
179 trained, highly skilled, well-resourced, and dedicated child
180 welfare workforce and that the child welfare system is only as
181 good as the individuals who conduct investigations, provide
182 services to children and families, and manage service delivery.

183 (b) The Legislature also finds that child welfare agencies
184 experience barriers to establishing and maintaining a stable,
185 effective, and diverse workforce because of issues relating to
186 recruitment, education and training, inadequate supervision,
187 retention and staff turnover, and lack of support for frontline
188 individuals.

189 (c) The Legislature further finds that, although numerous
190 initiatives have been developed to address these challenges,
191 isolated interventions often fail to yield positive results,
192 whereas implementing an integrated framework across multiple
193 domains can help child welfare agencies achieve effective
194 outcomes.

195 (d) It is the intent of the Legislature to ensure a
196 systematic approach to child welfare workforce staff development
197 and the well-being of individuals providing child welfare
198 services by establishing a uniform statewide program.

199 (2) CHILD WELFARE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK.-In order
200 to promote competency-based, outcome-focused, and data-driven
201 approaches to workforce development, the department, in



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202 collaboration with the Florida Institute for Child Welfare,
203 shall develop and implement a comprehensive child welfare
204 development workforce framework using a nationally recognized
205 model for workforce development. The framework must address, at
206 a minimum, all of the following components:

- 207 (a) Recruitment and hiring.
- 208 (b) Education and professional preparation.
- 209 (c) Professional training and development.
- 210 (d) Supervision.
- 211 (e) Retention.
- 212 (f) Caseload and workload.
- 213 (g) Workforce well-being and support.
- 214 (h) Work-life balance and flexible scheduling.
- 215 (i) Agency culture and climate.

216 (3) WORKFORCE EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS.—

217 (a) The department shall make every effort to recruit and
218 hire qualified professional staff to serve as child protective
219 investigators and child protective investigation supervisors who
220 are qualified by their education and experience to perform
221 social work functions. The department, in collaboration with the
222 lead agencies, subcontracted provider organizations, the Florida
223 Institute for Child Welfare, and other partners in the child
224 welfare system, shall develop a protocol for screening
225 candidates for child protective positions which reflects the
226 preferences specified in subparagraphs 1., 2., and 3. The
227 following persons must be given preference in recruitment, but
228 this preference serves only as guidance and does not limit the
229 department's discretion to select the best available candidates:

- 230 1. Individuals with a baccalaureate degree in social work,



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231 and child protective investigation supervisors with a master's
232 degree in social work, from a college or university social work
233 program accredited by the Council on Social Work Education.

234 2. Individuals with a bachelor's degree or a master's
235 degree in psychology, sociology, counseling, special education,
236 education, human development, child development, family
237 development, marriage and family therapy, or nursing.

238 3. Individuals with baccalaureate degrees who have a
239 combination of directly relevant work and volunteer experience,
240 preferably in a public service field related to children's
241 services, which demonstrates critical thinking skills, formal
242 assessment processes, communication skills, problem solving, and
243 empathy; a commitment to helping children and families; a
244 capacity to work as part of a team; an interest in continuous
245 development of skills and knowledge; and sufficient personal
246 strength and resilience to manage competing demands and handle
247 workplace stresses.

248 (b) By each October 1, the department shall submit a report
249 on the educational qualifications, turnover, and working
250 conditions of child protective investigators and supervisors to
251 the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of
252 the House of Representatives.

253 (c) By January 1, 2021, the community-based care lead
254 agencies shall submit to the department a plan and timeline for
255 recruiting and hiring child welfare staff providing care for
256 dependent children which meet the same educational requirements
257 as required for child protective investigators and child
258 protective investigation supervisors under this subsection. The
259 plan and timeline must include the same recruiting and hiring



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260 requirements for child welfare staff employed by subcontractors.

261 (4) WORKFORCE TRAINING.—

262 (a) In order to enable the state to recruit and retain a
263 qualified and diverse child welfare workforce that is well-
264 trained, well-supervised, and well-supported, the department
265 shall establish a program for a comprehensive system to provide
266 both preservice and inservice child welfare competency-based
267 training that all child welfare staff, including all staff
268 providing care for dependent children employed by a community-
269 based care lead agency or by a subcontractor of such agency, are
270 required to participate in and successfully complete,
271 appropriate to their areas of responsibility. Such program must
272 include training in the recognition of and appropriate responses
273 to head trauma and brain injury in a child under 6 years of age,
274 which must be developed by the Child Protection Team Program
275 within the Department of Health.

276 (b) By January 1, 2021, the department shall establish,
277 maintain, and oversee the operation of at least one regional
278 child welfare professional development center in this state. The
279 department shall determine the number and location of, and the
280 timeframe for establishing, additional development centers and
281 shall contract for the operation of the centers with a public
282 postsecondary institution pursuant to s. 402.7305.

283 (5) WORKFORCE WELL-BEING AND SUPPORT.—The Legislature finds
284 that vicarious trauma, burnout, and lack of self-care can
285 challenge all first responders, including child welfare
286 professionals. First responders who care for others often need
287 peer counseling, crisis support, and other resilience-building
288 services to normalize issues and promote retention. The



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289 Legislature further finds that these activities are best
290 provided by those with shared life experiences who may provide
291 assistance that traditional mental health or employee assistance
292 programs are unable to provide.

293 (a) The department shall establish an Office of Well-Being
294 and Support.

295 (b) The department shall contract with one or more
296 university-based centers that have expertise in behavioral
297 health to develop and coordinate the implementation of a
298 helpline that is operational 24 hours per day and 7 days a week,
299 staffed by former child welfare supervisors and caseworkers and
300 child protective investigators, and reflective of the nationally
301 recognized best practice reciprocal peer support model. The
302 helpline must be capable of providing peer support, telephone
303 assessment, and referral services.

304 (c) The department shall submit a report providing an
305 update on the activities of the office and implementation of the
306 helpline to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the
307 Speaker of the House of Representatives on December 1, 2020.

308 (6) CHILD WELFARE TRAINING TRUST FUND.—

309 (a) There is created within the State Treasury a Child
310 Welfare Training Trust Fund to be used by the Department of
311 Children and Families for the purpose of funding the
312 professional development of persons providing child welfare
313 services.

314 (b) One dollar from every noncriminal traffic infraction
315 collected pursuant to s. 318.14(10)(b) or s. 318.18 shall be
316 deposited into the Child Welfare Training Trust Fund.

317 (c) In addition to the funds generated by paragraph (b),



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318 the trust fund shall receive funds generated from an additional
319 fee on birth certificates and dissolution of marriage filings,
320 as specified in ss. 382.0255 and 28.101, respectively, and may
321 receive funds from any other public or private source.

322 (d) Funds that are not expended by the end of the budget
323 cycle or through a supplemental budget approved by the
324 department shall revert to the trust fund.

325 (7) ATTORNEYS EMPLOYED BY THE DEPARTMENT TO HANDLE CHILD
326 WELFARE CASES.—With the exception of attorneys hired after July
327 1, 2014, but before July 1, 2020, who shall complete the
328 training required under this subsection by January 31, 2021,
329 attorneys hired by the department on or after July 1, 2014,
330 whose primary responsibility is representing the department in
331 child welfare cases shall receive training within the first 6
332 months of employment in:

333 (a) The dependency court process, including the attorney's
334 role in preparing and reviewing documents prepared for
335 dependency court for accuracy and completeness;

336 (b) Preparing and presenting child welfare cases, including
337 at least 1 week of shadowing an experienced children's legal
338 services attorney who is preparing and presenting cases;

339 (c) Safety assessment, safety decisionmaking tools, and
340 safety plans;

341 (d) Developing information presented by investigators and
342 case managers to support decisionmaking in the best interest of
343 children; and

344 (e) The experiences and techniques of case managers and
345 investigators, including shadowing an experienced child
346 protective investigator and an experienced case manager for at



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347 least 8 hours.

348 (8) ADOPTION OF RULES.—The department shall adopt rules
349 necessary to administer this section.

350 Section 5. Paragraph (f) of subsection (1) and subsection
351 (3) of section 409.988, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

352 409.988 Lead agency duties; general provisions.—

353 (1) DUTIES.—A lead agency:

354 (f) Shall ensure that all individuals providing care for
355 dependent children participate in and successfully complete the
356 program of ~~receive appropriate~~ training relevant to the
357 individual's area of responsibility and meet the minimum
358 employment standards established by the department pursuant to
359 s. 402.40. The training curriculum must include training in the
360 recognition of and appropriate responses to head trauma and
361 brain injury in a child under 6 years of age developed by the
362 Child Protection Team Program within the Department of Health.

363 (3) SERVICES.—A lead agency must provide dependent children
364 with services that are supported by research or that are
365 recognized as best practices in the child welfare field. The
366 agency shall give priority to the use of services that are
367 evidence-based and trauma-informed and may also provide other
368 innovative services, including, but not limited to, family-
369 centered and cognitive-behavioral interventions designed to
370 mitigate out-of-home placements and intensive family
371 reunification services that combine child welfare and mental
372 health services for families with dependent children under 6
373 years of age.

374 Section 6. Section 943.17298, Florida Statutes, is created
375 to read:



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376 943.17298 Training in the recognition of and responses to
377 head trauma and brain injury.—Each law enforcement officer must
378 successfully complete training on the subject of the recognition
379 of and appropriate responses to head trauma and brain injury in
380 a child under 6 years of age developed by the Child Protection
381 Team Program within the Department of Health to aid an officer
382 in the detection of head trauma and brain injury due to child
383 abuse. Such training must be completed as part of the basic
384 recruit training for a law enforcement officer, as required
385 under s. 943.13(9), or as a part of continuing training or
386 education required under s. 943.135(1), before July 1, 2022.

387 Section 7. Section 1004.615, Florida Statutes, is amended
388 to read:

389 1004.615 Florida Institute for Child Welfare.—

390 (1) There is established the Florida Institute for Child
391 Welfare within the Florida State University College of Social
392 Work. The purpose of the institute is to advance the well-being
393 of children and families who are involved with, or at risk of
394 becoming involved with, the child welfare system by facilitating
395 and supporting statewide partnerships to develop competency-
396 based education, training, and support to prepare a diverse
397 group of social work professionals for careers in child welfare
398 ~~by improving the performance of child protection and child~~
399 ~~welfare services through research, policy analysis, evaluation,~~
400 ~~and leadership development.~~ The institute shall consist of a
401 consortium of public and private universities offering degrees
402 in social work and shall be housed within the Florida State
403 University College of Social Work.

404 (2) Using such resources as authorized in the General



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405 Appropriations Act, the Department of Children and Families
406 shall collaborate ~~contract~~ with the institute for performance of
407 the duties described in subsection (3) ~~(4)~~ using state
408 appropriations, public and private grants, and other resources
409 obtained by the institute.

410 (3) In order to increase and retain a higher percentage of
411 professionally educated social workers in the child welfare
412 system and serve as a statewide resource for child welfare
413 workforce education and training, the institute, in
414 collaboration with the Department of Children and Families,
415 shall:

416 (a) Design and disseminate a continuum of social work
417 education and training which emphasizes child welfare workforce
418 stabilization and professionalization by aligning social work
419 curriculum and training with critical practice skills pursuant
420 to s. 402.40.

421 (b) Identify methods to promote continuing professional
422 development and systems of workplace support for existing child
423 welfare staff.

424 (c) Develop a best practice model for providing feedback on
425 curriculum to social work programs and for ensuring that interns
426 who will be entering the child welfare profession are well-
427 supervised by university personnel during their internships.

428 (d) Create a Title IV-E program designed to provide
429 professional education and monetary support to undergraduate and
430 graduate social work students who intend to pursue or continue a
431 career in child welfare. Goals of the program should include:

432 1. Increasing the number of individuals in the child
433 welfare workforce who have a bachelor's degree or master's



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434 degree in social work.

435 2. Prioritizing the enrollment of current child welfare
436 staff employed by the state.

437 3. Prioritizing the enrollment of students who reflect the
438 diversity of the state's child welfare population.

439 4. Providing specific program support through the provision
440 of specialized competency-based child welfare curriculum and
441 monetary support to students.

442 (e) Engage in evaluation and dissemination of evidence-
443 based and promising practices in child welfare and build high-
444 quality evaluation into new program models and pilots.

445
446 The institute shall also provide consultation on the creation of
447 the Office of Well-Being and Support within the Department of
448 Children and Families pursuant to s. 402.40 ~~The institute shall~~
449 ~~work with the department, sheriffs providing child protective~~
450 ~~investigative services, community-based care lead agencies,~~
451 ~~community-based care provider organizations, the court system,~~
452 ~~the Department of Juvenile Justice, the Florida Coalition~~
453 ~~Against Domestic Violence, and other partners who contribute to~~
454 ~~and participate in providing child protection and child welfare~~
455 ~~services.~~

456 ~~(4) The institute shall:~~

457 ~~(a) Maintain a program of research which contributes to~~
458 ~~scientific knowledge and informs both policy and practice~~
459 ~~related to child safety, permanency, and child and family well-~~
460 ~~being.~~

461 ~~(b) Advise the department and other organizations~~
462 ~~participating in the child protection and child welfare system~~



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463 ~~regarding scientific evidence on policy and practice related to~~
464 ~~child safety, permanency, and child and family well-being.~~

465 ~~(c) Provide advice regarding management practices and~~
466 ~~administrative processes used by the department and other~~
467 ~~organizations participating in the child protection and child~~
468 ~~welfare system and recommend improvements that reduce~~
469 ~~burdensome, ineffective requirements for frontline staff and~~
470 ~~their supervisors while enhancing their ability to effectively~~
471 ~~investigate, analyze, problem solve, and supervise.~~

472 ~~(d) Assess the performance of child protection and child~~
473 ~~welfare services based on specific outcome measures.~~

474 ~~(e) Evaluate the scope and effectiveness of preservice and~~
475 ~~inservice training for child protection and child welfare~~
476 ~~employees and advise and assist the department in efforts to~~
477 ~~improve such training.~~

478 ~~(f) Assess the readiness of social work graduates to assume~~
479 ~~job responsibilities in the child protection and child welfare~~
480 ~~system and identify gaps in education which can be addressed~~
481 ~~through the modification of curricula or the establishment of~~
482 ~~industry certifications.~~

483 ~~(g) Develop and maintain a program of professional support~~
484 ~~including training courses and consulting services that assist~~
485 ~~both individuals and organizations in implementing adaptive and~~
486 ~~resilient responses to workplace stress.~~

487 ~~(h) Participate in the department's critical incident~~
488 ~~response team, assist in the preparation of reports about such~~
489 ~~incidents, and support the committee review of reports and~~
490 ~~development of recommendations.~~

491 ~~(i) Identify effective policies and promising practices,~~



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492 ~~including, but not limited to, innovations in coordination~~
493 ~~between entities participating in the child protection and child~~
494 ~~welfare system, data analytics, working with the local~~
495 ~~community, and management of human service organizations, and~~
496 ~~communicate these findings to the department and other~~
497 ~~organizations participating in the child protection and child~~
498 ~~welfare system.~~

499 ~~(j) Develop a definition of a child or family at high risk~~
500 ~~of abuse or neglect. Such a definition must consider~~
501 ~~characteristics associated with a greater probability of abuse~~
502 ~~and neglect.~~

503 ~~(5)~~ The President of the Florida State University shall
504 appoint a director of the institute. The director must be a
505 child welfare professional with a degree in social work who
506 holds a faculty appointment in the Florida State University
507 College of Social Work. The institute shall be administered by
508 the director, and the director's office shall be located at the
509 Florida State University. The director is responsible for
510 overall management of the institute and for developing and
511 executing the work of the institute consistent with the
512 responsibilities in subsection (3) ~~(4)~~. The director shall
513 engage individuals in other state universities with accredited
514 colleges of social work to participate in the institute.
515 Individuals from other university programs relevant to the
516 institute's work, including, but not limited to, economics,
517 management, law, medicine, and education, may also be invited by
518 the director to contribute to the institute. The universities
519 participating in the institute shall provide facilities, staff,
520 and other resources to the institute to establish statewide



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521 access to institute programs and services.

522 ~~(5)-(6)~~ By each October 1 ~~of each year~~, the institute shall
523 provide a written report to the Governor, the President of the
524 Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives which
525 outlines its activities in the preceding year, reports
526 significant research findings, as well as results of other
527 programs, and provides specific recommendations for improving
528 education, training, and support for individuals in the child
529 welfare workforce ~~child protection and child welfare services.~~

530 ~~(a) The institute shall include an evaluation of the~~
531 ~~results of the educational and training requirements for child~~
532 ~~protection and child welfare personnel established under this~~
533 ~~act and recommendations for application of the results to child~~
534 ~~protection personnel employed by sheriff's offices providing~~
535 ~~child protection services in its report due October 1, 2017.~~

536 ~~(b) The institute shall include an evaluation of the~~
537 ~~effects of the other provisions of this act and recommendations~~
538 ~~for improvements in child protection and child welfare services~~
539 ~~in its report due October 1, 2018.~~

540 ~~(7) The institute shall submit a report with~~
541 ~~recommendations for improving the state's child welfare system.~~
542 ~~The report shall address topics including, but not limited to,~~
543 ~~enhancing working relationships between the entities involved in~~
544 ~~the child protection and child welfare system, identification of~~
545 ~~and replication of best practices, reducing paperwork,~~
546 ~~increasing the retention of child protective investigators and~~
547 ~~case managers, and caring for medically complex children within~~
548 ~~the child welfare system, with the goal of allowing the child to~~
549 ~~remain in the least restrictive and most nurturing environment.~~



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550 ~~The institute shall submit an interim report by February 1,~~
551 ~~2015, and final report by October 1, 2015, to the Governor, the~~
552 ~~President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of~~
553 ~~Representatives.~~

554 Section 8. Section 402.402, Florida Statutes, is repealed.

555 Section 9. Section 402.731, Florida Statutes, is amended to
556 read:

557 402.731 ~~Department of Children and Families certification~~
558 ~~programs for employees and service providers;~~ Employment
559 provisions for transition to community-based care.—

560 ~~(1) The Department of Children and Families is authorized~~
561 ~~to approve third-party credentialing entities, as defined in s.~~
562 ~~402.40, for its employees and service providers to ensure that~~
563 ~~only qualified employees and service providers provide client~~
564 ~~services.~~

565 ~~(2)~~ The department shall develop and implement employment
566 programs to attract and retain competent staff to support and
567 facilitate the transition to privatized community-based care.
568 Such employment programs shall include lump-sum bonuses, salary
569 incentives, relocation allowances, or severance pay. The
570 department shall also contract for the delivery or
571 administration of outplacement services. The department shall
572 establish time-limited exempt positions as provided in s.
573 110.205(2)(i), in accordance with the authority provided in s.
574 216.262(1)(c)1. Employees appointed to fill such exempt
575 positions shall have the same salaries and benefits as career
576 service employees.

577 Section 10. Subsection (9) of section 409.996, Florida
578 Statutes, is amended to read:



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579 409.996 Duties of the Department of Children and Families.-
580 The department shall contract for the delivery, administration,
581 or management of care for children in the child protection and
582 child welfare system. In doing so, the department retains
583 responsibility for the quality of contracted services and
584 programs and shall ensure that services are delivered in
585 accordance with applicable federal and state statutes and
586 regulations.

587 (9) The department shall develop, in cooperation with the
588 lead agencies, ~~a third-party credentialing entity approved~~
589 ~~pursuant to s. 402.40(3)~~, and the Florida Institute for Child
590 Welfare established pursuant to s. 1004.615, a standardized
591 competency-based curriculum for certification training for child
592 protection staff.

593 Section 11. Paragraph (h) of subsection (1) of section
594 1009.25, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

595 1009.25 Fee exemptions.-

596 (1) The following students are exempt from the payment of
597 tuition and fees, including lab fees, at a school district that
598 provides workforce education programs, Florida College System
599 institution, or state university:

600 (h) Pursuant to s. 402.403, child protection and child
601 welfare personnel ~~as defined in s. 402.402~~ who are enrolled in
602 an accredited bachelor's degree or master's degree in social
603 work program, provided that the student attains at least a grade
604 of "B" in all courses for which tuition and fees are exempted.

605 Section 12. This act shall take effect July 1, 2020.