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

A bill to be entitled

An act relating to child welfare; providing a short title; amending s. 39.202, F.S.; adding credentialing for child welfare services to list of entities with access to certain records held by the department; amending s. 39.303, F.S.; requiring Child Protection Teams to be capable of providing certain training relating to head trauma and brain injuries in children younger than a specified age; amending s. 39.401, F.S.; providing for a second medical opinion in specified child abuse cases; amending s. 39.8296, F.S.; revising the membership of the curriculum committee established to develop a specified training program; requiring the training program to include certain training relating to head trauma and brain injuries in children younger than a specified age; amending s. 402.40, F.S.; revising legislative findings and providing legislative intent; requiring the Department of Children and Families to develop and implement a specified child welfare workforce development framework in collaboration with other specified entities; providing requirements for the department relating to workforce education requirements; requiring the department to submit an annual report to the Governor and the Legislature by a specified date; requiring community-based care lead agencies to submit a plan and timeline to the



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



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57 report that the institute must provide to the Governor
58 and the Legislature; deleting obsolete provisions;
59 repealing s. 402.402, F.S., relating to child
60 protection and child welfare personnel and attorneys
61 employed by the department; amending ss. 409.996, and
62 1009.25, F.S.; conforming provisions to changes made
63 by the act; providing an effective date.
64

65 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:
66

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

68 Section 2. Paragraph (a) of subsection (2) of section
69 39.202, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

70 39.202 Confidentiality of reports and records in cases of
71 child abuse or neglect.—

72 (2) Except as provided in subsection (4), access to such
73 records, excluding the name of, or other identifying information
74 with respect to, the reporter which shall be released only as
75 provided in subsection (5), shall be granted only to the
76 following persons, officials, and agencies:

77 (a) Employees, authorized agents, or contract providers of
78 the department, the Department of Health, the Agency for Persons
79 with Disabilities, the Office of Early Learning, or county
80 agencies responsible for carrying out:

- 81 1. Child or adult protective investigations;
- 82 2. Ongoing child or adult protective services;
- 83 3. Early intervention and prevention services;
- 84 4. Healthy Start services;
- 85 5. Licensure or approval of adoptive homes, foster homes,



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86 child care facilities, facilities licensed under chapter 393,
87 family day care homes, providers who receive school readiness
88 funding under part VI of chapter 1002, or other homes used to
89 provide for the care and welfare of children;

90 6. Employment screening for caregivers in residential group
91 homes; ~~or~~

92 7. Services for victims of domestic violence when provided
93 by certified domestic violence centers working at the
94 department's request as case consultants or with shared clients-
95 ;or

96 8. Credentialing of child welfare services staff pursuant
97 to s. 402.40.

98
99 Also, employees or agents of the Department of Juvenile Justice
100 responsible for the provision of services to children, pursuant
101 to chapters 984 and 985.

102 Section 3. Paragraph (h) of subsection (3) of section
103 39.303, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

104 39.303 Child Protection Teams and sexual abuse treatment
105 programs; services; eligible cases.-

106 (3) The Department of Health shall use and convene the
107 Child Protection Teams to supplement the assessment and
108 protective supervision activities of the family safety and
109 preservation program of the Department of Children and Families.
110 This section does not remove or reduce the duty and
111 responsibility of any person to report pursuant to this chapter
112 all suspected or actual cases of child abuse, abandonment, or
113 neglect or sexual abuse of a child. The role of the Child
114 Protection Teams is to support activities of the program and to



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115 provide services deemed by the Child Protection Teams to be
116 necessary and appropriate to abused, abandoned, and neglected
117 children upon referral. The specialized diagnostic assessment,
118 evaluation, coordination, consultation, and other supportive
119 services that a Child Protection Team must be capable of
120 providing include, but are not limited to, the following:

121 (h) Such training services for program and other employees
122 of the Department of Children and Families, employees of the
123 Department of Health, and other medical professionals as is
124 deemed appropriate to enable them to develop and maintain their
125 professional skills and abilities in handling child abuse,
126 abandonment, and neglect cases. The training services must
127 include training in the recognition of and appropriate responses
128 to head trauma and brain injury in a child under 6 years of age
129 as required under ss. 39.8296, 402.40, and 943.17298.

130
131 A Child Protection Team that is evaluating a report of medical
132 neglect and assessing the health care needs of a medically
133 complex child shall consult with a physician who has experience
134 in treating children with the same condition.

135 Section 4. Subsection (3) of section 39.401, Florida
136 Statutes, is amended to read:

137 39.401 Taking a child alleged to be dependent into custody;
138 law enforcement officers and authorized agents of the
139 department.-

140 (3) If the child is taken into custody by, or is delivered
141 to, an authorized agent of the department, the agent shall
142 review the facts supporting the removal with an attorney
143 representing the department. The purpose of the review is to



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144 determine whether there is probable cause for the filing of a
145 shelter petition.

146 (a) If the facts are not sufficient, the child shall
147 immediately be returned to the custody of the parent or legal
148 custodian.

149 (b) If the facts are sufficient and the child has not been
150 returned to the custody of the parent or legal custodian, the
151 department shall file the petition and schedule a hearing, and
152 the attorney representing the department shall request that a
153 shelter hearing be held within 24 hours after the removal of the
154 child. While awaiting the shelter hearing, the authorized agent
155 of the department may place the child in licensed shelter care
156 or may release the child to a parent or legal custodian or
157 responsible adult relative or the adoptive parent of the child's
158 sibling who shall be given priority consideration over a
159 licensed placement, or a responsible adult approved by the
160 department if this is in the best interests of the child.

161 Placement of a child which is not in a licensed shelter must be
162 preceded by a criminal history records check as required under
163 s. 39.0138. In addition, the department may authorize placement
164 of a housekeeper/homemaker in the home of a child alleged to be
165 dependent until the parent or legal custodian assumes care of
166 the child.

167 (c) If the decision to remove a child from the home is
168 predicated upon a medical evaluation performed by a Child
169 Protection Team pursuant to s. 39.303, the parent or legal
170 guardian of the child may request a second, independent
171 evaluation be performed by a physician who has met the relevant
172 qualifications of s. 39.303(b) in order to determine whether the



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173 child has been the victim of abuse or neglect. The court must
174 consider this evaluation when determining whether to remove a
175 child from the home.

176 Section 5. Paragraph (b) of subsection (2) of section
177 39.8296, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

178 39.8296 Statewide Guardian Ad Litem Office; legislative
179 findings and intent; creation; appointment of executive
180 director; duties of office.—

181 (2) STATEWIDE GUARDIAN AD LITEM OFFICE.—There is created a
182 Statewide Guardian Ad Litem Office within the Justice
183 Administrative Commission. The Justice Administrative Commission
184 shall provide administrative support and service to the office
185 to the extent requested by the executive director within the
186 available resources of the commission. The Statewide Guardian Ad
187 Litem Office shall not be subject to control, supervision, or
188 direction by the Justice Administrative Commission in the
189 performance of its duties, but the employees of the office shall
190 be governed by the classification plan and salary and benefits
191 plan approved by the Justice Administrative Commission.

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

196 1. The office shall identify the resources required to
197 implement methods of collecting, reporting, and tracking
198 reliable and consistent case data.

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

201 3. The office, in consultation with local guardian ad litem



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202 offices, shall develop statewide performance measures and
203 standards.

204 ~~4. The office shall develop a guardian ad litem training~~
205 ~~program.~~ The office shall establish a curriculum committee to
206 develop a guardian ad litem ~~the training program specified in~~
207 ~~this subparagraph.~~ The curriculum committee shall include, but
208 not be limited to, dependency judges, directors of circuit
209 guardian ad litem programs, active certified guardians ad litem,
210 a mental health professional who specializes in the treatment of
211 children, a member of a child advocacy group, a representative
212 of the Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence, an
213 individual with a degree in social work, and a social worker
214 experienced in working with victims and perpetrators of child
215 abuse. The training program must include training in the
216 recognition of and appropriate responses to head trauma and
217 brain injury in a child under 6 years of age developed by the
218 Child Protection Team Program within the Department of Health.

219 5. The office shall review the various methods of funding
220 guardian ad litem programs, shall maximize the use of those
221 funding sources to the extent possible, and shall review the
222 kinds of services being provided by circuit guardian ad litem
223 programs.

224 6. The office shall determine the feasibility or
225 desirability of new concepts of organization, administration,
226 financing, or service delivery designed to preserve the civil
227 and constitutional rights and fulfill other needs of dependent
228 children.

229 7. In an effort to promote normalcy and establish trust
230 between a court-appointed volunteer guardian ad litem and a



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231 child alleged to be abused, abandoned, or neglected under this
232 chapter, a guardian ad litem may transport a child. However, a
233 guardian ad litem volunteer may not be required or directed by
234 the program or a court to transport a child.

235 8. The office shall submit to the Governor, the President
236 of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and
237 the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court an interim report
238 describing the progress of the office in meeting the goals as
239 described in this section. The office shall submit to the
240 Governor, the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House
241 of Representatives, and the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court a
242 proposed plan including alternatives for meeting the state's
243 guardian ad litem and attorney ad litem needs. This plan may
244 include recommendations for less than the entire state, may
245 include a phase-in system, and shall include estimates of the
246 cost of each of the alternatives. Each year the office shall
247 provide a status report and provide further recommendations to
248 address the need for guardian ad litem services and related
249 issues.

250 Section 6. Section 402.40, Florida Statutes, is amended to
251 read:

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

254 402.40 Child welfare workforce; development; training;
255 certification; well-being.-

256 (1) LEGISLATIVE FINDINGS AND INTENT.-

257 (a) The Legislature finds that positive outcomes for
258 children and families involved with the child welfare system
259 often are attributable to the strong commitment of a well-



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260 trained, highly skilled, well-resourced, and dedicated child
261 welfare workforce and that the child welfare system is only as
262 good as the individuals who conduct investigations, provide
263 services to children and families, and manage service delivery.

264 (b) The Legislature also finds that child welfare agencies
265 experience barriers to establishing and maintaining a stable,
266 effective, and diverse workforce because of issues relating to
267 recruitment, education and training, inadequate supervision,
268 retention and staff turnover, and lack of support for frontline
269 individuals.

270 (c) The Legislature further finds that, although numerous
271 initiatives have been developed to address these challenges,
272 isolated interventions often fail to yield positive results,
273 whereas implementing an integrated framework across multiple
274 domains can help child welfare agencies achieve effective
275 outcomes.

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

280 (2) CHILD WELFARE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK.—In order
281 to promote competency-based, outcome-focused, and data-driven
282 approaches to workforce development, the department, in
283 collaboration with the Florida Institute for Child Welfare,
284 shall develop and implement a comprehensive child welfare
285 development workforce framework using a nationally recognized
286 model for workforce development. The framework must address, at
287 a minimum, all of the following components:

288 (a) Recruitment and hiring.



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- 289 (b) Education and professional preparation.
290 (c) Professional training and development.
291 (d) Supervision.
292 (e) Retention.
293 (f) Caseload and workload.
294 (g) Workforce well-being and support.
295 (h) Work-life balance and flexible scheduling.
296 (i) Agency culture and climate.
297 (3) WORKFORCE EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS.—
298 (a) The department shall make every effort to recruit and
299 hire qualified professional staff to serve as child protective
300 investigators and child protective investigation supervisors who
301 are qualified by their education and experience to perform
302 social work functions. The department, in collaboration with the
303 lead agencies, subcontracted provider organizations, the Florida
304 Institute for Child Welfare, and other partners in the child
305 welfare system, shall develop a protocol for screening
306 candidates for child protective positions which reflects the
307 preferences specified in subparagraphs 1., 2., and 3. The
308 following persons must be given preference in recruitment, but
309 this preference serves only as guidance and does not limit the
310 department's discretion to select the best available candidates:
311 1. Individuals with a baccalaureate degree in social work,
312 and child protective investigation supervisors with a master's
313 degree in social work, from a college or university social work
314 program accredited by the Council on Social Work Education.
315 2. Individuals with a bachelor's degree or a master's
316 degree in psychology, sociology, counseling, special education,
317 education, human development, child development, family



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318 development, marriage and family therapy, or nursing.

319 3. Individuals with baccalaureate degrees who have a
320 combination of directly relevant work and volunteer experience,
321 preferably in a public service field related to children's
322 services, which demonstrates critical thinking skills, formal
323 assessment processes, communication skills, problem solving, and
324 empathy; a commitment to helping children and families; a
325 capacity to work as part of a team; an interest in continuous
326 development of skills and knowledge; and sufficient personal
327 strength and resilience to manage competing demands and handle
328 workplace stresses.

329 (b) By each October 1, the department shall submit a report
330 on the educational qualifications, turnover, and working
331 conditions of child protective investigators and supervisors to
332 the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of
333 the House of Representatives.

334 (c) By January 1, 2021, the community-based care lead
335 agencies shall submit to the department a plan and timeline for
336 recruiting and hiring child welfare staff providing care for
337 dependent children which meet the same educational requirements
338 as required for child protective investigators and child
339 protective investigation supervisors under this subsection. The
340 plan and timeline must include the same recruiting and hiring
341 requirements for child welfare staff employed by subcontractors.

342 (4) WORKFORCE TRAINING.—

343 (a) In order to enable the state to recruit and retain a
344 qualified and diverse child welfare workforce that is well-
345 trained, well-supervised, and well-supported, the department
346 shall establish a program for a comprehensive system to provide



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347 both preservice and inservice child welfare competency-based
348 training that all child welfare staff, including all staff
349 providing care for dependent children employed by a community-
350 based care lead agency or by a subcontractor of such agency, are
351 required to participate in and successfully complete,
352 appropriate to their areas of responsibility. Such program must
353 include training in the recognition of and appropriate responses
354 to head trauma and brain injury in a child under 6 years of age,
355 which must be developed by the Child Protection Team Program
356 within the Department of Health.

357 (b) Community-based care lead agencies may develop any
358 additional training for persons delivering child welfare
359 services their service areas if the curriculum does not conflict
360 with training required in(a).

361 (c) By October 1, 2021, the department shall establish,
362 maintain, and oversee the operation of at least one regional
363 child welfare professional development center in this state. The
364 department shall determine the number and location of, and the
365 timeframe for establishing, additional development centers and
366 shall contract for the operation of the centers with a public
367 postsecondary institution pursuant to s. 402.7305.

368 (5) WORKFORCE WELL-BEING AND SUPPORT.-The Legislature finds
369 that vicarious trauma, burnout, and lack of self-care can
370 challenge all first responders, including child welfare
371 professionals. First responders who care for others often need
372 peer counseling, crisis support, and other resilience-building
373 services to normalize issues and promote retention. The
374 Legislature further finds that these activities are best
375 provided by those with shared life experiences who may provide



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376 assistance that traditional mental health or employee assistance
377 programs are unable to provide.

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

380 (b) The department shall contract with one or more
381 university-based centers that have expertise in behavioral
382 health to develop and coordinate the implementation of a
383 helpline that is operational 24 hours per day and 7 days a week,
384 staffed by former child welfare supervisors and caseworkers and
385 child protective investigators, and reflective of the nationally
386 recognized best practice reciprocal peer support model. The
387 helpline must be capable of providing peer support, telephone
388 assessment, and referral services.

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

393 (6) WORKFORCE CERTIFICATION.— The department shall approve
394 one or more third-party credentialing entities for the purpose
395 of developing and administering child welfare certification
396 programs for persons who provide child welfare services. A
397 third-party credentialing entity shall request such approval in
398 writing from the department. In order to obtain approval, the
399 third-party credentialing entity must:

400 (a) Establish professional requirements and standards that
401 applicants must achieve in order to obtain a child welfare
402 certification and to maintain such certification.

403 (b) Develop and apply core competencies and examination
404 instruments according to nationally recognized certification and



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405 psychometric standards.

406 (c) Maintain a professional code of ethics and a
407 disciplinary process that apply to all persons holding child
408 welfare certification.

409 (d) Maintain a database, accessible to the public, of all
410 persons holding child welfare certification, including any
411 history of ethical violations.

412 (e) Require annual continuing education for persons holding
413 child welfare certification, , to include ensuring compliance
414 with the training requirements in(4)by certified professionals
415 as a condition of renewal or initial certification. The third-
416 party credentialing entity shall track and report compliance
417 with this section to the Department on an annual basis.

418 (f) Administer a continuing education provider program to
419 ensure that only qualified providers offer continuing education
420 opportunities for certificateholders.

421 (g) All certified child welfare professionals must follow
422 the requirements of the third-party credentialing entities code
423 of ethical and professional conduct and disciplinary procedures.

424 1.The department, community based care lead agencies,
425 sheriff offices and their contracted providers shall report all
426 allegations of suspected or known violation of ethical or
427 professional misconduct standards to the department approved
428 third party credentialing entity, to include all allegations
429 made to the Department's Office of Inspector General on
430 certified personnel.

431 2. The third-party credentialing entity will review all
432 case records involving the death of a child or other critical
433 incident to ensure compliance with the third-party credentialing



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434 entity's published code of ethical and professional conduct and
435 disciplinary procedures.

436 3. The department will provide the third-party
437 credentialing entity with all reports necessary to conduct a
438 thorough investigation on all certified child welfare service
439 providers involved with the case.

440 4. The third-party credentialing entity will immediately
441 suspend the certification of all certified individuals involved
442 in the case pending the results of the initial review of the
443 certified professional's role and performance as it relates to
444 the case circumstance.

445 5. The department or sub-contracted employer of the
446 certified staff must immediately remove the individual(s) from
447 their duties that require certification as a condition of
448 employment until the initial review is complete and the third-
449 party credentialing entity determines if an ethics case is
450 warranted.

451 6. Any decision by a department approved credentialing
452 entity to deny, revoke, or suspend a certification, or otherwise
453 impose sanctions on an individual who is certified, is
454 reviewable by the department. Upon receiving an adverse
455 determination, the person aggrieved may request an
456 administrative hearing pursuant to ss. 120.569 and 120.57(1)
457 within 30 days after completing any appeals process offered by
458 the credentialing entity or the department, as applicable.

459 7. The third-party credentialing entity shall track and
460 report compliance with this subsection to the department.

461 (g) Maintain an advisory committee, including
462 representatives from each region of the department, each



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463 sheriff's office providing child protective services, and each
464 community-based care lead agency, who shall be appointed by the
465 organization they represent. The third-party credentialing
466 entity may appoint additional members to the advisory committee.

467 (7) CHILD WELFARE TRAINING TRUST FUND.—

468 (a) There is created within the State Treasury a Child
469 Welfare Training Trust Fund to be used by the Department of
470 Children and Families for the purpose of funding the
471 professional development of persons providing child welfare
472 services.

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

476 (c) In addition to the funds generated by paragraph (b),
477 the trust fund shall receive funds generated from an additional
478 fee on birth certificates and dissolution of marriage filings,
479 as specified in ss. 382.0255 and 28.101, respectively, and may
480 receive funds from any other public or private source.

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

484 (8) ATTORNEYS EMPLOYED BY THE DEPARTMENT TO HANDLE CHILD
485 WELFARE CASES.—With the exception of attorneys hired after July
486 1, 2014, but before July 1, 2020, who shall complete the
487 training required under this subsection by January 31, 2021,
488 attorneys hired by the department on or after July 1, 2014,
489 whose primary responsibility is representing the department in
490 child welfare cases shall receive training within the first 6
491 months of employment in:



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

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

498 (c) Safety assessment, safety decisionmaking tools, and
499 safety plans;

500 (d) Developing information presented by investigators and
501 case managers to support decisionmaking in the best interest of
502 children; and

503 (e) The experiences and techniques of case managers and
504 investigators, including shadowing an experienced child
505 protective investigator and an experienced case manager for at
506 least 8 hours.

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

509 Section 7. Paragraph (f) of subsection (1) and subsection
510 (3) of section 409.988, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

511 409.988 Lead agency duties; general provisions.—

512 (1) DUTIES.—A lead agency:

513 (f) Shall ensure that all individuals providing care for
514 dependent children participate in and successfully complete the
515 program of ~~receive appropriate~~ training relevant to the
516 individual's area of responsibility and meet the minimum
517 employment standards established by the department. pursuant to
518 s. 402.40. The training curriculum must include training in the
519 recognition of and appropriate responses to head trauma and
520 brain injury in a child under 6 years of age developed by the



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521 Child Protection Team Program within the Department of Health.

522 (3) SERVICES.—A lead agency must provide dependent children
523 with services that are supported by research or that are
524 recognized as best practices in the child welfare field. The
525 agency shall give priority to the use of services that are
526 evidence-based and trauma-informed and may also provide other
527 innovative services, including, but not limited to, family-
528 centered and cognitive-behavioral interventions designed to
529 mitigate out-of-home placements and intensive family
530 reunification services that combine child welfare and mental
531 health services for families with dependent children under 6
532 years of age.

533 Section 8. Section 943.17298, Florida Statutes, is created
534 to read:

535 943.17298 Training in the recognition of and responses to
536 head trauma and brain injury.—Each law enforcement officer must
537 successfully complete training on the subject of the recognition
538 of and appropriate responses to head trauma and brain injury in
539 a child under 6 years of age developed by the Child Protection
540 Team Program within the Department of Health to aid an officer
541 in the detection of head trauma and brain injury due to child
542 abuse. Such training must be completed as part of the basic
543 recruit training for a law enforcement officer, as required
544 under s. 943.13(9), or as a part of continuing training or
545 education required under s. 943.135(1), before July 1, 2022.

546 Section 9. Section 1004.615, Florida Statutes, is amended
547 to read:

548 1004.615 Florida Institute for Child Welfare.—

549 (1) There is established the Florida Institute for Child



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550 Welfare within the Florida State University College of Social
551 Work. The purpose of the institute is to advance the well-being
552 of children and families who are involved with, or at risk of
553 becoming involved with, the child welfare system by facilitating
554 and supporting statewide partnerships to develop competency-
555 based education, training, and support to prepare a diverse
556 group of social work professionals for careers in child welfare
557 ~~by improving the performance of child protection and child~~
558 ~~welfare services through research, policy analysis, evaluation,~~
559 ~~and leadership development.~~ The institute shall consist of a
560 consortium of public and private universities offering degrees
561 in social work and shall be housed within the Florida State
562 University College of Social Work.

563 (2) Using such resources as authorized in the General
564 Appropriations Act, the Department of Children and Families
565 shall collaborate ~~contract~~ with the institute for performance of
566 the duties described in subsection (3) ~~(4)~~ using state
567 appropriations, public and private grants, and other resources
568 obtained by the institute.

569 (3) In order to increase and retain a higher percentage of
570 professionally educated social workers in the child welfare
571 system and serve as a statewide resource for child welfare
572 workforce education and training, the institute, in
573 collaboration with the Department of Children and Families,
574 shall:

575 (a) Design and disseminate a continuum of social work
576 education and training which emphasizes child welfare workforce
577 stabilization and professionalization by aligning social work
578 curriculum and training with critical practice skills pursuant



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579 to s. 402.40.

580 (b) Identify methods to promote continuing professional
581 development and systems of workplace support for existing child
582 welfare staff.

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

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

591 1. Increasing the number of individuals in the child
592 welfare workforce who have a bachelor's degree or master's
593 degree in social work.

594 2. Prioritizing the enrollment of current child welfare
595 staff employed by the state.

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

598 4. Providing specific program support through the provision
599 of specialized competency-based child welfare curriculum and
600 monetary support to students.

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

604
605 The institute shall also provide consultation on the
606 creation of the Office of Well-Being and Support within the
607 Department of Children and Families pursuant to s. 402.40 ~~The~~



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608 ~~institute shall work with the department, sheriffs providing~~
609 ~~child protective investigative services, community-based care~~
610 ~~lead agencies, community-based care provider organizations, the~~
611 ~~court system, the Department of Juvenile Justice, the Florida~~
612 ~~Coalition Against Domestic Violence, and other partners who~~
613 ~~contribute to and participate in providing child protection and~~
614 ~~child welfare services.~~

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

616 (a) ~~Maintain a program of research which contributes to~~
617 ~~scientific knowledge and informs both policy and practice~~
618 ~~related to child safety, permanency, and child and family well-~~
619 ~~being.~~

620 (b) ~~Advise the department and other organizations~~
621 ~~participating in the child protection and child welfare system~~
622 ~~regarding scientific evidence on policy and practice related to~~
623 ~~child safety, permanency, and child and family well-being.~~

624 (c) ~~Provide advice regarding management practices and~~
625 ~~administrative processes used by the department and other~~
626 ~~organizations participating in the child protection and child~~
627 ~~welfare system and recommend improvements that reduce~~
628 ~~burdensome, ineffective requirements for frontline staff and~~
629 ~~their supervisors while enhancing their ability to effectively~~
630 ~~investigate, analyze, problem solve, and supervise.~~

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

633 (e) ~~Evaluate the scope and effectiveness of preservice and~~
634 ~~inservice training for child protection and child welfare~~
635 ~~employees and advise and assist the department in efforts to~~
636 ~~improve such training.~~



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637 ~~(f) Assess the readiness of social work graduates to assume~~
638 ~~job responsibilities in the child protection and child welfare~~
639 ~~system and identify gaps in education which can be addressed~~
640 ~~through the modification of curricula or the establishment of~~
641 ~~industry certifications.~~

642 ~~(g) Develop and maintain a program of professional support~~
643 ~~including training courses and consulting services that assist~~
644 ~~both individuals and organizations in implementing adaptive and~~
645 ~~resilient responses to workplace stress.~~

646 ~~(h) Participate in the department's critical incident~~
647 ~~response team, assist in the preparation of reports about such~~
648 ~~incidents, and support the committee review of reports and~~
649 ~~development of recommendations.~~

650 ~~(i) Identify effective policies and promising practices,~~
651 ~~including, but not limited to, innovations in coordination~~
652 ~~between entities participating in the child protection and child~~
653 ~~welfare system, data analytics, working with the local~~
654 ~~community, and management of human service organizations, and~~
655 ~~communicate these findings to the department and other~~
656 ~~organizations participating in the child protection and child~~
657 ~~welfare system.~~

658 ~~(j) Develop a definition of a child or family at high risk~~
659 ~~of abuse or neglect. Such a definition must consider~~
660 ~~characteristics associated with a greater probability of abuse~~
661 ~~and neglect.~~

662 ~~(5) The President of the Florida State University shall~~
663 ~~appoint a director of the institute. The director must be a~~
664 ~~child welfare professional with a degree in social work who~~
665 ~~holds a faculty appointment in the Florida State University~~



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666 College of Social Work. The institute shall be administered by
667 the director, and the director's office shall be located at the
668 Florida State University. The director is responsible for
669 overall management of the institute and for developing and
670 executing the work of the institute consistent with the
671 responsibilities in subsection (3) ~~(4)~~. The director shall
672 engage individuals in other state universities with accredited
673 colleges of social work to participate in the institute.
674 Individuals from other university programs relevant to the
675 institute's work, including, but not limited to, economics,
676 management, law, medicine, and education, may also be invited by
677 the director to contribute to the institute. The universities
678 participating in the institute shall provide facilities, staff,
679 and other resources to the institute to establish statewide
680 access to institute programs and services.

681 ~~(5)(6)~~ By each October 1 ~~of each year~~, the institute shall
682 provide a written report to the Governor, the President of the
683 Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives which
684 outlines its activities in the preceding year, reports
685 significant research findings, as well as results of other
686 programs, and provides specific recommendations for improving
687 education, training, and support for individuals in the child
688 welfare workforce ~~child protection and child welfare services.~~

689 ~~(a) The institute shall include an evaluation of the~~
690 ~~results of the educational and training requirements for child~~
691 ~~protection and child welfare personnel established under this~~
692 ~~act and recommendations for application of the results to child~~
693 ~~protection personnel employed by sheriff's offices providing~~
694 ~~child protection services in its report due October 1, 2017.~~



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

699 ~~(7) The institute shall submit a report with~~
700 ~~recommendations for improving the state's child welfare system.~~
701 ~~The report shall address topics including, but not limited to,~~
702 ~~enhancing working relationships between the entities involved in~~
703 ~~the child protection and child welfare system, identification of~~
704 ~~and replication of best practices, reducing paperwork,~~
705 ~~increasing the retention of child protective investigators and~~
706 ~~ease managers, and caring for medically complex children within~~
707 ~~the child welfare system, with the goal of allowing the child to~~
708 ~~remain in the least restrictive and most nurturing environment.~~
709 ~~The institute shall submit an interim report by February 1,~~
710 ~~2015, and final report by October 1, 2015, to the Governor, the~~
711 ~~President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of~~
712 ~~Representatives.~~

713 Section 10. Section 402.402, Florida Statutes, is
714 repealed.

715 Section 11. Subsection (9) of section 409.996, Florida
716 Statutes, is amended to read:

717 409.996 Duties of the Department of Children and Families.—
718 The department shall contract for the delivery, administration,
719 or management of care for children in the child protection and
720 child welfare system. In doing so, the department retains
721 responsibility for the quality of contracted services and
722 programs and shall ensure that services are delivered in
723 accordance with applicable federal and state statutes and



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724 regulations.

725 (9) The department shall develop, in cooperation with the
726 lead agencies, ~~a third-party credentialing entity approved~~
727 ~~pursuant to s. 402.40(3)~~, and the Florida Institute for Child
728 Welfare established pursuant to s. 1004.615, a standardized
729 competency-based curriculum for certification training for child
730 protection staff.

731 Section 12. Paragraph (h) of subsection (1) of section
732 1009.25, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

733 1009.25 Fee exemptions.—

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

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

743 Section 13. This act shall take effect July 1, 2020.

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