

By the Committee on Children, Families, and Elder Affairs; and
Senators Rouson, Berman, Hooper, and Book

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1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to child welfare; providing a short
3 title; amending s. 39.202, F.S.; expanding the list of
4 entities with access to certain records that relate to
5 child abandonment, abuse, or neglect held by the
6 Department of Children and Families; amending s.
7 39.303, F.S.; requiring Child Protection Teams to be
8 capable of providing certain training relating to head
9 trauma and brain injuries in children younger than a
10 specified age; amending s. 39.401, F.S.; authorizing
11 the parent or legal guardian of a child to request a
12 second medical evaluation of a child under certain
13 circumstances; requiring the court to consider such
14 evaluation when determining whether to remove the
15 child from the home; amending s. 39.8296, F.S.;
16 revising the membership of the curriculum committee
17 established to develop a specified training program;
18 requiring the training program to include certain
19 training relating to head trauma and brain injuries in
20 children younger than a specified age; amending s.
21 402.40, F.S.; revising legislative findings and
22 providing legislative intent; requiring the department
23 to develop and implement a specified child welfare
24 workforce development framework in collaboration with
25 other specified entities; providing requirements for
26 the department relating to workforce education
27 requirements; requiring the department to submit an
28 annual report to the Governor and the Legislature by a
29 specified date; requiring community-based care lead

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30 agencies to submit a plan and timeline to the
31 department relating to certain child welfare staff by
32 a specified date; providing requirements for the
33 department related to workforce training; providing
34 legislative findings; requiring the department to
35 establish an Office of Well-Being and Support;
36 requiring the department to contract with certain
37 university-based centers to develop and coordinate the
38 implementation of a specified helpline; requiring the
39 department to submit a report on the implementation of
40 such helpline to the Governor and the Legislature on a
41 specified date; providing additional duties for third-
42 party credentialing entities; requiring certain
43 attorneys employed by the department to complete
44 certain training by a specified date; deleting
45 definitions; deleting provisions relating to core
46 competencies and specializations; amending s. 409.988,
47 F.S.; requiring a lead agency to ensure that certain
48 individuals receive specified training relating to
49 head trauma and brain injuries in children younger
50 than a specified age; revising the types of services a
51 lead agency is required to provide; creating s.
52 943.17298, F.S.; requiring law enforcement officers to
53 complete training relating to head trauma and brain
54 injuries in children younger than a specified age as
55 part of either basic recruit training or continuing
56 training or education by a specified date; amending s.
57 1004.615, F.S.; revising the purpose of the Florida
58 Institute for Child Welfare; revising requirements for

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59 the institute; revising the contents of the annual
60 report that the institute must provide to the Governor
61 and the Legislature; deleting obsolete provisions;
62 repealing s. 402.402, F.S., relating to child
63 protection and child welfare personnel and attorneys
64 employed by the department; amending ss. 409.996 and
65 1009.25, F.S.; conforming provisions to changes made
66 by the act; providing an effective date.

67
68 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

69
70 Section 1. This act may be cited as "Jordan's Law."

71 Section 2. Paragraph (a) of subsection (2) of section
72 39.202, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

73 39.202 Confidentiality of reports and records in cases of
74 child abuse or neglect.—

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

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

- 84 1. Child or adult protective investigations;
- 85 2. Ongoing child or adult protective services;
- 86 3. Early intervention and prevention services;
- 87 4. Healthy Start services;

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88 5. Licensure or approval of adoptive homes, foster homes,
89 child care facilities, facilities licensed under chapter 393,
90 family day care homes, providers who receive school readiness
91 funding under part VI of chapter 1002, or other homes used to
92 provide for the care and welfare of children;

93 6. Employment screening for caregivers in residential group
94 homes; ~~or~~

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

99 8. Credentialing of child welfare services staff pursuant
100 to s. 402.40.

101
102 Also, employees or agents of the Department of Juvenile Justice
103 responsible for the provision of services to children, pursuant
104 to chapters 984 and 985.

105 Section 3. Paragraph (h) of subsection (3) of section
106 39.303, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

107 39.303 Child Protection Teams and sexual abuse treatment
108 programs; services; eligible cases.—

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

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

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

133

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

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

140 39.401 Taking a child alleged to be dependent into custody;
141 law enforcement officers and authorized agents of the
142 department.—

143 (3) If the child is taken into custody by, or is delivered
144 to, an authorized agent of the department, the agent shall
145 review the facts supporting the removal with an attorney

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146 representing the department. The purpose of the review is to
147 determine whether there is probable cause for the filing of a
148 shelter petition.

149 (a) If the facts are not sufficient, the child shall
150 immediately be returned to the custody of the parent or legal
151 custodian.

152 (b) If the facts are sufficient and the child has not been
153 returned to the custody of the parent or legal custodian, the
154 department shall file the petition and schedule a hearing, and
155 the attorney representing the department shall request that a
156 shelter hearing be held within 24 hours after the removal of the
157 child. While awaiting the shelter hearing, the authorized agent
158 of the department may place the child in licensed shelter care
159 or may release the child to a parent or legal custodian or
160 responsible adult relative or the adoptive parent of the child's
161 sibling who shall be given priority consideration over a
162 licensed placement, or a responsible adult approved by the
163 department if this is in the best interests of the child.
164 Placement of a child which is not in a licensed shelter must be
165 preceded by a criminal history records check as required under
166 s. 39.0138. In addition, the department may authorize placement
167 of a housekeeper/homemaker in the home of a child alleged to be
168 dependent until the parent or legal custodian assumes care of
169 the child.

170 (c) If the decision to remove a child from the home is
171 predicated upon a medical evaluation performed by a Child
172 Protection Team pursuant to s. 39.303, the parent or legal
173 guardian of the child may request that a second, independent
174 evaluation be performed by a physician who has met the relevant

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175 qualifications of s. 39.303(2)(b) in order to determine whether
176 the child has been the victim of abuse or neglect. The court
177 must consider this evaluation when determining whether to remove
178 a child from the home.

179 Section 5. Paragraph (b) of subsection (2) of section
180 39.8296, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

181 39.8296 Statewide Guardian Ad Litem Office; legislative
182 findings and intent; creation; appointment of executive
183 director; duties of office.—

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

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

199 1. The office shall identify the resources required to
200 implement methods of collecting, reporting, and tracking
201 reliable and consistent case data.

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

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204 3. The office, in consultation with local guardian ad litem
205 offices, shall develop statewide performance measures and
206 standards.

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

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

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

232 7. In an effort to promote normalcy and establish trust

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233 between a court-appointed volunteer guardian ad litem and a
234 child alleged to be abused, abandoned, or neglected under this
235 chapter, a guardian ad litem may transport a child. However, a
236 guardian ad litem volunteer may not be required or directed by
237 the program or a court to transport a child.

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

253 Section 6. Section 402.40, Florida Statutes, is amended to
254 read:

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

257 402.40 Child welfare workforce; development; training;
258 certification; well-being.-

259 (1) LEGISLATIVE FINDINGS AND INTENT.-

260 (a) The Legislature finds that positive outcomes for
261 children and families involved with the child welfare system

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262 often are attributable to the strong commitment of a well-
263 trained, highly skilled, well-resourced, and dedicated child
264 welfare workforce and that the child welfare system is only as
265 good as the individuals who conduct investigations, provide
266 services to children and families, and manage service delivery.

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

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

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

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

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

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320 education, human development, child development, family
321 development, marriage and family therapy, or nursing.

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

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

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

345 (4) WORKFORCE TRAINING.—

346 (a) In order to enable the state to recruit and retain a
347 qualified and diverse child welfare workforce that is well-
348 trained, well-supervised, and well-supported, the department

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

360 (b) A community-based care lead agency may develop
361 additional training for persons delivering child welfare
362 services in the agency's service area if the curriculum does not
363 conflict with training required in paragraph (a).

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

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

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378 provided by those with shared life experiences who may provide
379 assistance that traditional mental health or employee assistance
380 programs are unable to provide.

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

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

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

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

403 (a) Establish professional requirements and standards that
404 applicants must achieve in order to obtain a child welfare
405 certification and to maintain such certification.

406 (b) Develop and apply core competencies and examination

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407 instruments according to nationally recognized certification and
408 psychometric standards.

409 (c) Maintain a professional code of ethics and a
410 disciplinary process that apply to all persons holding child
411 welfare certification.

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

415 (e) Require annual continuing education for persons holding
416 child welfare certification and require certified professionals
417 to comply with the training requirements in subsection (4) as a
418 condition of renewal or initial certification. The third-party
419 credentialing entity shall track and report compliance with this
420 section to the department on an annual basis.

421 (f) Administer a continuing education provider program to
422 ensure that only qualified providers offer continuing education
423 opportunities for certificateholders.

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

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

434 2. The third-party credentialing entity shall review all
435 case records involving the death of a child or other critical

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436 incident to ensure compliance with the third-party credentialing
437 entity's published code of ethical and professional conduct and
438 disciplinary procedures.

439 3. The department shall provide the third-party
440 credentialing entity with all reports necessary to conduct a
441 thorough investigation on all certified child welfare service
442 providers involved with the case.

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

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

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

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

464 (h) Maintain an advisory committee, including

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

470 (7) CHILD WELFARE TRAINING TRUST FUND.—

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

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

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

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

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

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494 months of employment in:

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

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

501 (c) Safety assessment, safety decisionmaking tools, and
502 safety plans;

503 (d) Developing information presented by investigators and
504 case managers to support decisionmaking in the best interest of
505 children; and

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

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

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

514 409.988 Lead agency duties; general provisions.—

515 (1) DUTIES.—A lead agency:

516 (f) Shall ensure that all individuals providing care for
517 dependent children participate in and successfully complete the
518 program of ~~receive~~ appropriate training relevant to the
519 individual's area of responsibility and meet the minimum
520 employment standards established by the department pursuant to
521 s. 402.40. The training curriculum must include training in the
522 recognition of and appropriate responses to head trauma and

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523 brain injury in a child under 6 years of age developed by the
524 Child Protection Team Program within the Department of Health.

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

536 Section 8. Section 943.17298, Florida Statutes, is created
537 to read:

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

549 Section 9. Section 1004.615, Florida Statutes, is amended
550 to read:

551 1004.615 Florida Institute for Child Welfare.—

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

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

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

578 (a) Design and disseminate a continuum of social work
579 education and training which emphasizes child welfare workforce
580 stabilization and professionalization by aligning social work

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581 curriculum and training with critical practice skills pursuant
582 to s. 402.40.

583 (b) Identify methods to promote continuing professional
584 development and systems of workplace support for existing child
585 welfare staff.

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

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

594 1. Increasing the number of individuals in the child
595 welfare workforce who have a bachelor's degree or master's
596 degree in social work.

597 2. Prioritizing the enrollment of current child welfare
598 staff employed by the state.

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

601 4. Providing specific program support through the provision
602 of specialized competency-based child welfare curriculum and
603 monetary support to students.

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

607
608 The institute shall also provide consultation on the creation of
609 the Office of Well-Being and Support within the Department of

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610 Children and Families pursuant to s. 402.40 ~~The institute shall~~
611 ~~work with the department, sheriffs providing child protective~~
612 ~~investigative services, community-based care lead agencies,~~
613 ~~community-based care provider organizations, the court system,~~
614 ~~the Department of Juvenile Justice, the Florida Coalition~~
615 ~~Against Domestic Violence, and other partners who contribute to~~
616 ~~and participate in providing child protection and child welfare~~
617 ~~services.~~

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

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

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

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

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

636 ~~(e) Evaluate the scope and effectiveness of preservice and~~
637 ~~inservice training for child protection and child welfare~~
638 ~~employees and advise and assist the department in efforts to~~

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639 ~~improve such training.~~

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

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

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

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

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

665 ~~(5) The President of the Florida State University shall~~
666 ~~appoint a director of the institute. The director must be a~~
667 ~~child welfare professional with a degree in social work who~~

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

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

692 ~~(a) The institute shall include an evaluation of the~~
693 ~~results of the educational and training requirements for child~~
694 ~~protection and child welfare personnel established under this~~
695 ~~act and recommendations for application of the results to child~~
696 ~~protection personnel employed by sheriff's offices providing~~

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697 ~~child protection services in its report due October 1, 2017.~~

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

702 ~~(7) The institute shall submit a report with~~
703 ~~recommendations for improving the state's child welfare system.~~
704 ~~The report shall address topics including, but not limited to,~~
705 ~~enhancing working relationships between the entities involved in~~
706 ~~the child protection and child welfare system, identification of~~
707 ~~and replication of best practices, reducing paperwork,~~
708 ~~increasing the retention of child protective investigators and~~
709 ~~case managers, and caring for medically complex children within~~
710 ~~the child welfare system, with the goal of allowing the child to~~
711 ~~remain in the least restrictive and most nurturing environment.~~
712 ~~The institute shall submit an interim report by February 1,~~
713 ~~2015, and final report by October 1, 2015, to the Governor, the~~
714 ~~President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of~~
715 ~~Representatives.~~

716 Section 10. Section 402.402, Florida Statutes, is
717 repealed.

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

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

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726 accordance with applicable federal and state statutes and
727 regulations.

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

734 Section 12. Paragraph (h) of subsection (1) of section
735 1009.25, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

736 1009.25 Fee exemptions.—

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

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

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