

By Senator Grall

29-00804A-25

20251626\_\_

1                                   A bill to be entitled  
2           An act relating to child welfare; amending s. 16.56,  
3           F.S.; authorizing the Office of Statewide Prosecution  
4           in the Department of Legal Affairs to investigate and  
5           prosecute specified violations; amending s. 39.01,  
6           F.S.; revising the definition of the term "child who  
7           is found to be dependent"; defining the term "legal  
8           custodian"; amending s. 39.206, F.S.; authorizing  
9           certain persons to petition the court to release a  
10          reporter's identity in order to file a lawsuit for  
11          civil damages; authorizing the court to issue an order  
12          for an in-camera inspection of certain records;  
13          prohibiting the Department of Children and Families  
14          from being made a party to such action; creating s.  
15          39.3011, F.S.; defining the term "Family Advocacy  
16          Program"; requiring the department to enter into  
17          agreements with certain military installations for  
18          child protective investigations involving military  
19          families; providing requirements for such agreements;  
20          amending s. 39.401, F.S.; authorizing a law  
21          enforcement officer or an authorized agent of the  
22          department to take a child into custody who is the  
23          subject of a specified court order; amending s.  
24          39.5075, F.S.; authorizing, rather than requiring, the  
25          department or a community-based care provider to  
26          petition the court for a specified order; providing  
27          that a certain order may be issued only if a certain  
28          petition is filed by specified entities; creating s.  
29          39.5077, F.S.; defining the term "unaccompanied alien

29-00804A-25

20251626\_\_

30 child"; requiring any natural person who meets certain  
31 criteria to submit a specified report with the  
32 department; requiring such report be submitted within  
33 a specified time period; requiring any natural person  
34 who meets certain criteria to verify his or her  
35 relationship with an unaccompanied alien child in  
36 certain ways; requiring the person verifying his or  
37 her relationship with such child to pay for DNA  
38 testing; requiring such person to verify his or her  
39 relationship within a specified time period; requiring  
40 certain entities to submit a specified report to the  
41 department within a specified time period; requiring a  
42 specified attestation; providing criminal penalties  
43 and civil fines; requiring the department to notify  
44 certain persons or entities of certain requirements;  
45 requiring the department to notify the Department of  
46 Law Enforcement, the Office of Refugee Resettlement,  
47 and Immigration and Customs Enforcement under certain  
48 circumstances; authorizing the department to adopt  
49 certain rules; requiring certain persons or entities  
50 to submit a report to the central abuse hotline under  
51 certain circumstances; amending s. 39.905, F.S.;

52 authorizing the department to waive a specified  
53 requirement if there is an emergency need for a new  
54 domestic violence center, to issue a provisional  
55 certification to such center under certain  
56 circumstances, and to adopt rules relating to  
57 provisional certifications; amending s. 125.901, F.S.;

58 revising membership requirements for certain

29-00804A-25

20251626\_\_

59 independent special districts; amending s. 402.305,  
60 F.S.; authorizing the department to grant certain  
61 exemptions from disqualification for certain persons;  
62 amending s. 409.145, F.S.; requiring the department to  
63 establish a fee schedule for daily room and board  
64 rates for certain children by a date certain, which  
65 may include different rates based on a child's acuity  
66 level or the geographic location of the residential  
67 child-caring agency; requiring the department to adopt  
68 rules; amending s. 409.175, F.S.; authorizing the  
69 department to grant certain exemptions from  
70 disqualification for certain persons; authorizing the  
71 department to extend the expiration date of a license  
72 by a specified amount of time for a certain purpose;  
73 amending s. 419.001, F.S.; providing that certain  
74 residential child-caring agencies are not subject to  
75 certain proximity requirements; requiring a local  
76 government to exclude certain residential child-caring  
77 agencies from proximity limitations; amending s.  
78 553.73, F.S.; prohibiting the Florida Building  
79 Commission from mandating the installation of fire  
80 sprinklers or a fire suppression system in certain  
81 agencies licensed by the department; amending s.  
82 633.208, F.S.; providing that certain residential  
83 child-caring agencies are not required to install fire  
84 sprinklers or a fire suppression system under certain  
85 circumstances; amending s. 937.0201, F.S.; revising  
86 the definition of the term "missing child"; amending  
87 s. 937.021, F.S.; specifying the entity with

29-00804A-25

20251626\_\_

88 jurisdiction for accepting missing child reports under  
89 certain circumstances; authorizing law enforcement  
90 agencies to use reasonable force to take certain  
91 children into custody; amending ss. 402.30501,  
92 1002.57, and 1002.59, F.S.; conforming cross-  
93 references; providing effective dates.

94

95 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

96

97 Section 1. Effective January 1, 2026, paragraph (a) of  
98 subsection (1) of section 16.56, Florida Statutes, is amended to  
99 read:

100 16.56 Office of Statewide Prosecution.—

101 (1) There is created in the Department of Legal Affairs an  
102 Office of Statewide Prosecution. The office shall be a separate  
103 "budget entity" as that term is defined in chapter 216. The  
104 office may:

105 (a) Investigate and prosecute the offenses of:

106 1. Bribery, burglary, criminal usury, extortion, gambling,  
107 kidnapping, larceny, murder, prostitution, perjury, robbery,  
108 carjacking, home-invasion robbery, and patient brokering;

109 2. Any crime involving narcotic or other dangerous drugs;

110 3. Any violation of the Florida RICO (Racketeer Influenced  
111 and Corrupt Organization) Act, including any offense listed in  
112 the definition of racketeering activity in s. 895.02(8)(a),  
113 providing such listed offense is investigated in connection with  
114 a violation of s. 895.03 and is charged in a separate count of  
115 an information or indictment containing a count charging a  
116 violation of s. 895.03, the prosecution of which listed offense

29-00804A-25

20251626\_\_

117 may continue independently if the prosecution of the violation  
118 of s. 895.03 is terminated for any reason;

119 4. Any violation of the Florida Anti-Fencing Act;

120 5. Any violation of the Florida Antitrust Act of 1980, as  
121 amended;

122 6. Any crime involving, or resulting in, fraud or deceit  
123 upon any person;

124 7. Any violation of s. 847.0135, relating to computer  
125 pornography and child exploitation prevention, or any offense  
126 related to a violation of s. 847.0135 or any violation of  
127 chapter 827 where the crime is facilitated by or connected to  
128 the use of the Internet or any device capable of electronic data  
129 storage or transmission;

130 8. Any violation of chapter 815;

131 9. Any violation of chapter 825;

132 10. Any criminal violation of part I of chapter 499;

133 11. Any violation of the Florida Motor Fuel Tax Relief Act  
134 of 2004;

135 12. Any criminal violation of s. 409.920 or s. 409.9201;

136 13. Any criminal violation of the Florida Money Laundering  
137 Act;

138 14. Any criminal violation of the Florida Securities and  
139 Investor Protection Act;

140 15. Any violation of chapter 787, as well as any and all  
141 offenses related to a violation of chapter 787; ~~or~~

142 16. Any criminal violation of chapter 24, part II of  
143 chapter 285, chapter 546, chapter 550, chapter 551, or chapter  
144 849; or

145 17. Any violation of s. 39.5077;

29-00804A-25

20251626\_\_

146  
147 or any attempt, solicitation, or conspiracy to commit any of the  
148 crimes specifically enumerated above. The office shall have such  
149 power only when any such offense is occurring, or has occurred,  
150 in two or more judicial circuits as part of a related  
151 transaction, or when any such offense is connected with an  
152 organized criminal conspiracy affecting two or more judicial  
153 circuits. Informations or indictments charging such offenses  
154 shall contain general allegations stating the judicial circuits  
155 and counties in which crimes are alleged to have occurred or the  
156 judicial circuits and counties in which crimes affecting such  
157 circuits or counties are alleged to have been connected with an  
158 organized criminal conspiracy.

159 Section 2. Subsection (15) of section 39.01, Florida  
160 Statutes, is amended to read:

161 39.01 Definitions.—When used in this chapter, unless the  
162 context otherwise requires:

163 (15) "Child who is found to be dependent" means a child  
164 who, pursuant to this chapter, is found by the court:

165 (a) To have been abandoned, abused, or neglected by the  
166 child's parent or parents or legal custodians;

167 (b) To have been surrendered to the department, the former  
168 Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services, or a licensed  
169 child-placing agency for purpose of adoption;

170 (c) To have been voluntarily placed with a licensed child-  
171 caring agency, a licensed child-placing agency, an adult  
172 relative, the department, or the former Department of Health and  
173 Rehabilitative Services, after which placement, under the  
174 requirements of this chapter, a case plan has expired and the

29-00804A-25

20251626\_\_

175 parent or parents or legal custodians have failed to  
176 substantially comply with the requirements of the plan;

177 (d) To have been voluntarily placed with a licensed child-  
178 placing agency for the purposes of subsequent adoption, and a  
179 parent or parents have signed a consent pursuant to the Florida  
180 Rules of Juvenile Procedure;

181 (e) To have no parent or legal custodians capable of  
182 providing supervision and care;

183 (f) To be at substantial risk of imminent abuse,  
184 abandonment, or neglect by the parent or parents or legal  
185 custodians; or

186 (g) To have been sexually exploited and to have no parent,  
187 legal custodian, or responsible adult relative currently known  
188 and capable of providing the necessary and appropriate  
189 supervision and care.

190  
191 For purposes of this subsection, the term "legal custodian"  
192 includes a sponsor to whom an unaccompanied alien child, as  
193 defined in s. 39.5077(1), has been released by the Office of  
194 Refugee Resettlement of the Department of Health and Human  
195 Services. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, an  
196 unaccompanied alien child may not be found to have been  
197 abandoned, abused, or neglected based solely on allegations of  
198 abandonment, abuse, or neglect that occurred before placement in  
199 this state or by a parent who is not in the United States.

200 Section 3. Subsection (10) of section 39.206, Florida  
201 Statutes, is amended to read:

202 39.206 Administrative fines for false report of abuse,  
203 abandonment, or neglect of a child; civil damages.—

29-00804A-25

20251626\_\_

204 (10) A person who knowingly and willfully makes a false  
205 report of abuse, abandonment, or neglect of a child, or a person  
206 who counsels another to make a false report may be civilly  
207 liable for damages suffered, including reasonable attorney fees  
208 and costs, as a result of the filing of the false report. If  
209 there has not been a prior determination by the department that  
210 a person has filed a false report and the name of the person who  
211 filed the false report or counseled another to do so has not  
212 been disclosed under subsection (9), the person who alleges he  
213 or she is the subject of a false report may petition the court  
214 in the circuit in which the petitioner resides for a  
215 determination that the reporter's identity be released for the  
216 purpose of proceeding with a lawsuit for civil damages. Upon  
217 filing a legally sufficient petition by the petitioner that he  
218 or she is the subject of a false report, the court may issue a  
219 written order to the department to produce the report and  
220 records relating to such false report for an in-camera  
221 inspection. If ~~department as custodian of the records may be~~  
222 ~~named as a party in the suit until the dependency court~~  
223 ~~determines in a written order upon an in-camera in-camera~~  
224 inspection of the records and report the court finds that there  
225 is a reasonable basis for believing that the report was false,  
226 ~~and that~~ the identity of the reporter may be disclosed for the  
227 purpose of proceeding with a lawsuit for civil damages resulting  
228 from the filing of the false report. The person who was the  
229 subject of the alleged false report ~~alleged perpetrator~~ may  
230 submit witness affidavits to assist the court in making this  
231 initial determination. The department may not be made a party to  
232 such action.

29-00804A-25

20251626\_\_

233 Section 4. Section 39.3011, Florida Statutes, is created to  
234 read:

235 39.3011 Protective investigations involving military  
236 families.—

237 (1) For purposes of this section, the term “Family Advocacy  
238 Program” means the program established by the United States  
239 Department of Defense to address child abuse, neglect, and  
240 domestic abuse in military families.

241 (2) The department shall enter into an agreement for child  
242 protective investigations involving military families with the  
243 Family Advocacy Program, or any successor program, of each  
244 United States military installation located in this state. Such  
245 agreement must include procedures for all of the following:

246 (a) Identifying the military personnel alleged to have  
247 committed the child abuse, neglect, or domestic abuse.

248 (b) Notifying and sharing information with the military  
249 installation when a child protective investigation implicating  
250 military personnel has been initiated.

251 (c) Maintaining confidentiality as required under state and  
252 federal law.

253 Section 5. Paragraph (b) of subsection (1) of section  
254 39.401, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

255 39.401 Taking a child alleged to be dependent into custody;  
256 law enforcement officers and authorized agents of the  
257 department.—

258 (1) A child may only be taken into custody:

259 (b) By a law enforcement officer, or an authorized agent of  
260 the department, if the officer or authorized agent has probable  
261 cause to support a finding that the:

29-00804A-25

20251626\_\_

262 1. ~~That the~~ Child has been abused, neglected, or abandoned,  
263 or is suffering from or is in imminent danger of illness or  
264 injury as a result of abuse, neglect, or abandonment;

265 2. Child is the subject of a court order to take the child  
266 into the custody of the department;

267 3.2. ~~That the~~ Parent or legal custodian of the child has  
268 materially violated a condition of placement imposed by the  
269 court; or

270 4.3. ~~That the~~ Child has no parent, legal custodian, or  
271 responsible adult relative immediately known and available to  
272 provide supervision and care.

273 Section 6. Subsection (4) of section 39.5075, Florida  
274 Statutes, is amended to read:

275 39.5075 Citizenship or residency status for immigrant  
276 children who are dependents.—

277 (4) If the child may be eligible for special immigrant  
278 juvenile status, the department or community-based care provider  
279 may shall petition the court for an order finding that the child  
280 meets the criteria for special immigrant juvenile status. The  
281 ruling of the court on this petition must include findings as to  
282 the express wishes of the child, if the child is able to express  
283 such wishes, and any other circumstances that would affect  
284 whether the best interests of the child would be served by  
285 applying for special immigrant juvenile status. An order finding  
286 that a child meets the criteria for special immigrant juvenile  
287 status may be issued only upon a petition filed by the  
288 department or a community-based care provider under this  
289 section.

290 Section 7. Effective January 1, 2026, section 39.5077,

29-00804A-25

20251626\_\_

291 Florida Statutes, is created to read:

292 39.5077 Unaccompanied alien children.-

293 (1) For purposes of this section, the term "unaccompanied  
294 alien child" means a child who has no lawful immigration status  
295 in the United States, has not attained 18 years of age, and with  
296 respect to whom:

297 (a) There is no parent or legal guardian in the United  
298 States; or

299 (b) No parent or legal guardian in the United States is  
300 available to provide care and physical custody.

301 (2) (a) Any natural person who obtains or has obtained  
302 physical custody of an unaccompanied alien child through a  
303 corporation, public or private agency other than the department,  
304 or person other than the child's biological or adoptive parent,  
305 legal guardian, or court-appointed custodian; who retains such  
306 physical custody of the child for 10 or more consecutive days;  
307 and who is not the biological or adoptive parent, legal  
308 guardian, or court-appointed custodian of the child, must report  
309 such physical custody to the department and initiate proceedings  
310 under chapter 63, chapter 744, or chapter 751 to determine legal  
311 custody of the child.

312 (b)1. A person who obtains custody of an unaccompanied  
313 alien child on or after January 1, 2026, must comply with this  
314 subsection within 30 days after obtaining physical custody of  
315 such child.

316 2. A person who obtains custody of an unaccompanied alien  
317 child before January 1, 2026, must comply with this subsection  
318 within 90 days after January 1, 2026.

319 (3) (a) Any natural person who obtains or has obtained

29-00804A-25

20251626\_\_

320 physical custody of an unaccompanied alien child through a  
321 corporation, a public or private agency other than the  
322 department, or any other person and who is the biological or  
323 adoptive parent, legal guardian, or court-appointed custodian of  
324 the child must verify his or her relationship to the child by  
325 submitting to the department a DNA test or other adequate  
326 documentation as determined by the department. The cost of DNA  
327 testing is borne by the person verifying his or her relationship  
328 to the child.

329 (b)1. A person who obtains custody of an unaccompanied  
330 alien child on or after January 1, 2026, must comply with this  
331 subsection within 30 days after obtaining physical custody of  
332 such child.

333 2. A person who obtains custody of an unaccompanied alien  
334 child before January 1, 2026, must comply with this subsection  
335 within 90 days after January 1, 2026.

336 (4) An entity that takes placement of or transfers, or  
337 assists in the transfer of, physical custody of an unaccompanied  
338 alien child to any natural person or entity must report to the  
339 department within 30 days after such placement or transfer all  
340 identifying information of the unaccompanied alien child and the  
341 natural person or entity that received such placement or  
342 transfer of physical custody of the child. An entity that takes  
343 placement of or transfers, or assists in the transfer of,  
344 physical custody of an unaccompanied alien child must attest to  
345 notifying the natural person or entity obtaining physical  
346 custody of the child of all applicable requirements of this  
347 section.

348 (5) A natural person or an entity that willfully violates

29-00804A-25

20251626\_\_

349 subsections (2) and (3) commits a felony of the third degree,  
350 punishable as provided in s. 775.082, s. 775.083, or s. 775.084.  
351 If the natural person or entity is convicted, the court shall  
352 impose a fine of \$1,000 on the natural person or a fine of  
353 \$10,000 on an entity.

354 (6) If the department believes that a natural person or an  
355 entity has failed to report as required by this section, the  
356 department must notify in writing such person or entity of the  
357 obligation to report and the requirements of this section.

358 (7) The department shall notify the Department of Law  
359 Enforcement, the Office of Refugee Resettlement, and Immigration  
360 and Customs Enforcement if a natural person or an entity fails  
361 to report information required under this section within 30 days  
362 after receipt of the written notification required in subsection  
363 (6).

364 (8) The department may adopt rules to implement this  
365 section, including rules relating to:

366 (a) The specific information that must be reported to the  
367 department.

368 (b) Verifying biological or adoptive parentage, legal  
369 guardianship, or court-appointed custody as required under  
370 subsections (2) and (3).

371 (c) The creation of forms for all reports required under  
372 this section.

373 (9) A natural person or an entity that is involved with or  
374 interacts with an unaccompanied alien child and suspects abuse,  
375 abandonment, or neglect of such child must immediately submit a  
376 report to the central abuse hotline.

377 Section 8. Paragraph (h) of subsection (1) of section

29-00804A-25

20251626\_\_

378 39.905, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

379 39.905 Domestic violence centers.—

380 (1) Domestic violence centers certified under this part  
381 must:

382 (h) Demonstrate local need and ability to sustain  
383 operations through a history of 18 consecutive months' operation  
384 as a domestic violence center, including 12 months' operation of  
385 an emergency shelter as provided in paragraph (c), and a  
386 business plan which addresses future operations and funding of  
387 future operations. The department may waive this requirement if  
388 there is an emergency need for a new domestic violence center to  
389 provide services in an area, and no other viable options exist  
390 to ensure continuity of services. If there is an emergency need,  
391 the department may issue a provisional certification to the  
392 domestic violence center as long as the center meets all other  
393 criteria in this subsection. The department may adopt rules to  
394 provide minimum standards for a provisional certificate,  
395 including increased monitoring and site visits and the time  
396 period such certificate is valid.

397 Section 9. Paragraphs (a) and (b) of subsection (1) of  
398 section 125.901, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

399 125.901 Children's services; independent special district;  
400 council; powers, duties, and functions; public records  
401 exemption.—

402 (1) Each county may by ordinance create an independent  
403 special district, as defined in ss. 189.012 and 200.001(8)(e),  
404 to provide funding for children's services throughout the county  
405 in accordance with this section. The boundaries of such district  
406 shall be coterminous with the boundaries of the county. The

29-00804A-25

20251626\_\_

407 county governing body shall obtain approval at a general  
408 election, as defined in s. 97.021, by a majority vote of those  
409 electors voting on the question, to annually levy ad valorem  
410 taxes which shall not exceed the maximum millage rate authorized  
411 by this section. Any district created pursuant to the provisions  
412 of this subsection shall be required to levy and fix millage  
413 subject to the provisions of s. 200.065. Once such millage is  
414 approved by the electorate, the district shall not be required  
415 to seek approval of the electorate in future years to levy the  
416 previously approved millage. However, a referendum to increase  
417 the millage rate previously approved by the electors must be  
418 held at a general election, and the referendum may be held only  
419 once during the 48-month period preceding the effective date of  
420 the increased millage.

421 (a) The governing body of the district shall be a council  
422 on children's services, which may also be known as a juvenile  
423 welfare board or similar name as established in the ordinance by  
424 the county governing body. Such council shall consist of 10  
425 members, including the superintendent of schools; a local school  
426 board member; the district administrator from the appropriate  
427 district of the Department of Children and Families, or his or  
428 her designee who is a member of the Senior Management Service or  
429 of the Selected Exempt Service; one member of the county  
430 governing body; and the judge assigned to juvenile cases who  
431 shall sit as a voting member of the board, except that said  
432 judge shall not vote or participate in the setting of ad valorem  
433 taxes under this section. If there is more than one judge  
434 assigned to juvenile cases in a county, the chief judge shall  
435 designate one of said juvenile judges to serve on the board. The

29-00804A-25

20251626\_\_

436 remaining five members shall be appointed by the Governor, ~~and~~  
437 ~~shall, to the extent possible, represent the demographic~~  
438 ~~diversity of the population of the county. After soliciting~~  
439 ~~recommendations from the public,~~ The county governing body may  
440 ~~shall~~ submit to the Governor recommendations ~~the names of at~~  
441 ~~least three persons~~ for each vacancy and the Governor must make  
442 a selection within 45 days after receipt of the recommendations  
443 from the county governing body ~~occurring among the five members~~  
444 ~~appointed by the Governor, and the Governor shall appoint~~  
445 ~~members to the council from the candidates nominated by the~~  
446 ~~county governing body. The Governor shall make a selection~~  
447 ~~within a 45-day period or request a new list of candidates. All~~  
448 members appointed by the Governor must ~~shall~~ have been residents  
449 of the county for the previous 24-month period. Such members  
450 shall be appointed for 4-year terms, except that the length of  
451 the terms of the initial appointees shall be adjusted to stagger  
452 the terms. The Governor may remove a member for cause or upon  
453 the written petition of the county governing body. If any of the  
454 members of the council required to be appointed by the Governor  
455 under ~~the provisions of this subsection~~ resigns, dies, or is  
456 removed from office ~~shall resign, die, or be removed from~~  
457 ~~office,~~ the vacancy thereby created shall, as soon as  
458 practicable, be filled by appointment by the Governor, ~~using the~~  
459 ~~same method as the original appointment,~~ and such appointment to  
460 fill a vacancy shall be for the unexpired term of the person who  
461 resigns, dies, or is removed from office.

462 (b) However, any county as defined in s. 125.011(1) may  
463 instead have a governing body consisting of 33 members,  
464 including the superintendent of schools, or his or her designee;

29-00804A-25

20251626\_\_

465 two representatives of public postsecondary education  
466 institutions located in the county; the county manager or the  
467 equivalent county officer; the district administrator from the  
468 appropriate district of the Department of Children and Families,  
469 or the administrator's designee who is a member of the Senior  
470 Management Service or the Selected Exempt Service; the director  
471 of the county health department or the director's designee; the  
472 state attorney for the county or the state attorney's designee;  
473 the chief judge assigned to juvenile cases, or another juvenile  
474 judge who is the chief judge's designee and who shall sit as a  
475 voting member of the board, except that the judge may not vote  
476 or participate in setting ad valorem taxes under this section;  
477 an individual who is selected by the board of the local United  
478 Way or its equivalent; a member of a locally recognized faith-  
479 based coalition, selected by that coalition; a member of the  
480 local chamber of commerce, selected by that chamber or, if more  
481 than one chamber exists within the county, a person selected by  
482 a coalition of the local chambers; a member of the early  
483 learning coalition, selected by that coalition; a representative  
484 of a labor organization or union active in the county; a member  
485 of a local alliance or coalition engaged in cross-system  
486 planning for health and social service delivery in the county,  
487 selected by that alliance or coalition; a member of the local  
488 Parent-Teachers Association/Parent-Teacher-Student Association,  
489 selected by that association; a youth representative selected by  
490 the local school system's student government; a local school  
491 board member appointed by the chair of the school board; the  
492 mayor of the county or the mayor's designee; one member of the  
493 county governing body, appointed by the chair of that body; a

29-00804A-25

20251626\_\_

494 member of the state Legislature who represents residents of the  
495 county, selected by the chair of the local legislative  
496 delegation; an elected official representing the residents of a  
497 municipality in the county, selected by the county municipal  
498 league; and 4 members-at-large, appointed to the council by the  
499 majority of sitting council members. The remaining seven members  
500 shall be appointed by the Governor in accordance with procedures  
501 set forth in paragraph (a), except that the Governor may remove  
502 a member for cause or upon the written petition of the council.  
503 ~~Appointments by the Governor must, to the extent reasonably~~  
504 ~~possible, represent the geographic and demographic diversity of~~  
505 ~~the population of the county.~~ Members who are appointed to the  
506 council by reason of their position are not subject to the  
507 length of terms and limits on consecutive terms as provided in  
508 this section. The remaining appointed members of the governing  
509 body shall be appointed to serve 2-year terms, except that those  
510 members appointed by the Governor shall be appointed to serve 4-  
511 year terms, and the youth representative and the legislative  
512 delegate shall be appointed to serve 1-year terms. A member may  
513 be reappointed; however, a member may not serve for more than  
514 three consecutive terms. A member is eligible to be appointed  
515 again after a 2-year hiatus from the council.

516 Section 10. Subsection (2) of section 402.305, Florida  
517 Statutes, is amended to read:

518 402.305 Licensing standards; child care facilities.—

519 (2) PERSONNEL.—Minimum standards for child care personnel  
520 shall include minimum requirements as to:

521 (a) Good moral character based upon screening as defined in  
522 s. 402.302(15). This screening shall be conducted as provided in

29-00804A-25

20251626\_\_

523 chapter 435, using the level 2 standards for screening set forth  
524 in that chapter, and include employment history checks, a search  
525 of criminal history records, sexual predator and sexual offender  
526 registries, and child abuse and neglect registry of any state in  
527 which the current or prospective child care personnel resided  
528 during the preceding 5 years.

529 (b) Fingerprint submission for child care personnel, which  
530 shall comply with s. 435.12.

531 ~~(c) The department may grant exemptions from~~  
532 ~~disqualification from working with children or the~~  
533 ~~developmentally disabled as provided in s. 435.07.~~

534 (c)~~(d)~~ Minimum age requirements. Such minimum standards  
535 shall prohibit a person under the age of 21 from being the  
536 operator of a child care facility and a person under the age of  
537 16 from being employed at such facility unless such person is  
538 under direct supervision and is not counted for the purposes of  
539 computing the personnel-to-child ratio.

540 (d)~~(e)~~ Minimum training requirements for child care  
541 personnel.

542 1. Such minimum standards for training shall ensure that  
543 all child care personnel take an approved 40-clock-hour  
544 introductory course in child care, which course covers at least  
545 the following topic areas:

546 a. State and local rules and regulations which govern child  
547 care.

548 b. Health, safety, and nutrition.

549 c. Identifying and reporting child abuse and neglect.

550 d. Child development, including typical and atypical  
551 language, cognitive, motor, social, and self-help skills

29-00804A-25

20251626\_\_

552 development.

553 e. Observation of developmental behaviors, including using  
554 a checklist or other similar observation tools and techniques to  
555 determine the child's developmental age level.

556 f. Specialized areas, including computer technology for  
557 professional and classroom use and early literacy and language  
558 development of children from birth to 5 years of age, as  
559 determined by the department, for owner-operators and child care  
560 personnel of a child care facility.

561 g. Developmental disabilities, including autism spectrum  
562 disorder and Down syndrome, and early identification, use of  
563 available state and local resources, classroom integration, and  
564 positive behavioral supports for children with developmental  
565 disabilities.

566

567 Within 90 days after employment, child care personnel shall  
568 begin training to meet the training requirements. Child care  
569 personnel shall successfully complete such training within 1  
570 year after the date on which the training began, as evidenced by  
571 passage of a competency examination. Successful completion of  
572 the 40-clock-hour introductory course shall articulate into  
573 community college credit in early childhood education, pursuant  
574 to ss. 1007.24 and 1007.25. Exemption from all or a portion of  
575 the required training shall be granted to child care personnel  
576 based upon educational credentials or passage of competency  
577 examinations. Child care personnel possessing a 2-year degree or  
578 higher that includes 6 college credit hours in early childhood  
579 development or child growth and development, or a child  
580 development associate credential or an equivalent state-approved

29-00804A-25

20251626\_\_

581 child development associate credential, or a child development  
582 associate waiver certificate shall be automatically exempted  
583 from the training requirements in sub-subparagraphs b., d., and  
584 e.

585 2. The introductory course in child care shall stress, to  
586 the extent possible, an interdisciplinary approach to the study  
587 of children.

588 3. The introductory course shall cover recognition and  
589 prevention of shaken baby syndrome; prevention of sudden infant  
590 death syndrome; recognition and care of infants and toddlers  
591 with developmental disabilities, including autism spectrum  
592 disorder and Down syndrome; and early childhood brain  
593 development within the topic areas identified in this paragraph.

594 4. On an annual basis in order to further their child care  
595 skills and, if appropriate, administrative skills, child care  
596 personnel who have fulfilled the requirements for the child care  
597 training shall be required to take an additional 1 continuing  
598 education unit of approved inservice training, or 10 clock hours  
599 of equivalent training, as determined by the department.

600 5. Child care personnel shall be required to complete 0.5  
601 continuing education unit of approved training or 5 clock hours  
602 of equivalent training, as determined by the department, in  
603 early literacy and language development of children from birth  
604 to 5 years of age one time. The year that this training is  
605 completed, it shall fulfill the 0.5 continuing education unit or  
606 5 clock hours of the annual training required in subparagraph 4.

607 6. Procedures for ensuring the training of qualified child  
608 care professionals to provide training of child care personnel,  
609 including onsite training, shall be included in the minimum

29-00804A-25

20251626\_\_

610 standards. It is recommended that the state community child care  
611 coordination agencies (central agencies) be contracted by the  
612 department to coordinate such training when possible. Other  
613 district educational resources, such as community colleges and  
614 career programs, can be designated in such areas where central  
615 agencies may not exist or are determined not to have the  
616 capability to meet the coordination requirements set forth by  
617 the department.

618 7. Training requirements shall not apply to certain  
619 occasional or part-time support staff, including, but not  
620 limited to, swimming instructors, piano teachers, dance  
621 instructors, and gymnastics instructors.

622 8. The child care operator shall be required to take basic  
623 training in serving children with disabilities within 5 years  
624 after employment, either as a part of the introductory training  
625 or the annual 8 hours of inservice training.

626 (e)~~(f)~~ Periodic health examinations.

627 (f)~~(g)~~ A credential for child care facility directors. The  
628 credential shall be a required minimum standard for licensing.

629

630 The department may grant limited exemptions authorizing a person  
631 to work in a specified role or with a specified population.

632 Section 11. Paragraph (e) is added to subsection (3) of  
633 section 409.145, Florida Statutes, to read:

634 409.145 Care of children; "reasonable and prudent parent"  
635 standard.—The child welfare system of the department shall  
636 operate as a coordinated community-based system of care which  
637 empowers all caregivers for children in foster care to provide  
638 quality parenting, including approving or disapproving a child's

29-00804A-25

20251626\_\_

639 participation in activities based on the caregiver's assessment  
640 using the "reasonable and prudent parent" standard.

641 (3) ROOM AND BOARD RATES.—

642 (e) By July 1, 2026, the department shall, in coordination  
643 with its providers, establish a fee schedule for daily room and  
644 board rates for children in out-of-home care who are placed in a  
645 residential child-caring agency as defined in s. 409.175(2)(1).  
646 The fee schedule may include different payment rates based on  
647 factors including, but not limited to, the acuity level of the  
648 child being placed and the geographic location of the  
649 residential child-caring agency. The department shall adopt  
650 rules to implement this paragraph.

651 Section 12. Paragraph (b) of subsection (5), subsection  
652 (7), and paragraph (e) of subsection (14) of section 409.175,  
653 Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

654 409.175 Licensure of family foster homes, residential  
655 child-caring agencies, and child-placing agencies; public  
656 records exemption.—

657 (5) The department shall adopt and amend rules for the  
658 levels of licensed care associated with the licensure of family  
659 foster homes, residential child-caring agencies, and child-  
660 placing agencies. The rules may include criteria to approve  
661 waivers to licensing requirements when applying for a child-  
662 specific license.

663 (b) The requirements for licensure and operation of family  
664 foster homes, residential child-caring agencies, and child-  
665 placing agencies shall include:

666 1. The operation, conduct, and maintenance of these homes  
667 and agencies and the responsibility which they assume for

29-00804A-25

20251626\_\_

668 children served and the evidence of need for that service.

669 2. The provision of food, clothing, educational  
670 opportunities, services, equipment, and individual supplies to  
671 assure the healthy physical, emotional, and mental development  
672 of the children served.

673 3. The appropriateness, safety, cleanliness, and general  
674 adequacy of the premises, including fire prevention and health  
675 standards, to provide for the physical comfort, care, and well-  
676 being of the children served.

677 4. The ratio of staff to children required to provide  
678 adequate care and supervision of the children served and, in the  
679 case of family foster homes, the maximum number of children in  
680 the home.

681 5. The good moral character based upon screening,  
682 education, training, and experience requirements for personnel  
683 and family foster homes.

684 ~~6. The department may grant exemptions from~~  
685 ~~disqualification from working with children or the~~  
686 ~~developmentally disabled as provided in s. 435.07.~~

687 6.7. The provision of preservice and inservice training for  
688 all foster parents and agency staff.

689 ~~7.8.~~ Satisfactory evidence of financial ability to provide  
690 care for the children in compliance with licensing requirements.

691 ~~8.9.~~ The maintenance by the agency of records pertaining to  
692 admission, progress, health, and discharge of children served,  
693 including written case plans and reports to the department.

694 ~~9.10.~~ The provision for parental involvement to encourage  
695 preservation and strengthening of a child's relationship with  
696 the family.

29-00804A-25

20251626\_\_

697       ~~10.11.~~ The transportation safety of children served.  
698       ~~11.12.~~ The provisions for safeguarding the cultural,  
699 religious, and ethnic values of a child.  
700       ~~12.13.~~ Provisions to safeguard the legal rights of children  
701 served.  
702       ~~13.14.~~ Requiring signs to be conspicuously placed on the  
703 premises of facilities maintained by child-caring agencies to  
704 warn children of the dangers of human trafficking and to  
705 encourage the reporting of individuals observed attempting to  
706 engage in human trafficking activity. The signs must advise  
707 children to report concerns to the local law enforcement agency  
708 or the Department of Law Enforcement, specifying the appropriate  
709 telephone numbers used for such reports. The department shall  
710 specify, at a minimum, the content of the signs by rule.  
711  
712 The department may grant limited exemptions authorizing a person  
713 to work in a specified role or with a specified population.  
714       (7) The department may extend a license expiration date  
715 once for a period of up to 90 ~~30~~ days to allow for the  
716 implementation of corrective measures. However, the department  
717 may not extend a license expiration date more than once during a  
718 licensure period.  
719       (14)  
720       (e)1. In addition to any other preservice training required  
721 by law, foster parents, as a condition of licensure, and agency  
722 staff must successfully complete preservice training related to  
723 human trafficking which must be uniform statewide and must  
724 include, but need not be limited to, all of the following:  
725       a. Basic information on human trafficking, such as an

29-00804A-25

20251626\_\_

726 understanding of relevant terminology, and the differences  
727 between sex trafficking and labor trafficking.~~†~~

728 b. Factors and knowledge on identifying children at risk of  
729 human trafficking.~~†~~~~and~~

730 c. Steps that should be taken to prevent at-risk youths  
731 from becoming victims of human trafficking.

732 2. Foster parents, before licensure renewal, and agency  
733 staff, during each full year of employment, must complete  
734 inservice training related to human trafficking to satisfy the  
735 training requirement under subparagraph (5) (b) 6 ~~(5) (b) 7~~.

736 Section 13. Subsection (2), paragraph (c) of subsection  
737 (3), and subsection (4) of section 419.001, Florida Statutes,  
738 are amended to read:

739 419.001 Site selection of community residential homes.-

740 (2) Homes of six or fewer residents which otherwise meet  
741 the definition of a community residential home are considered  
742 ~~shall be deemed~~ a single-family unit and a noncommercial,  
743 residential use for the purpose of local laws and ordinances.  
744 Homes of six or fewer residents which otherwise meet the  
745 definition of a community residential home must ~~shall~~ be allowed  
746 in single-family or multifamily zoning without approval by the  
747 local government, provided that such homes are not located  
748 within a radius of 1,000 feet of another existing such home with  
749 six or fewer residents or within a radius of 1,200 feet of  
750 another existing community residential home. Such homes with six  
751 or fewer residents are not required to comply with the  
752 notification provisions of this section; provided that, before  
753 licensure, the sponsoring agency provides the local government  
754 with the most recently published data compiled from the

29-00804A-25

20251626\_\_

755 licensing entities that identifies all community residential  
756 homes within the jurisdictional limits of the local government  
757 in which the proposed site is to be located in order to show  
758 that there is not a home of six or fewer residents which  
759 otherwise meets the definition of a community residential home  
760 within a radius of 1,000 feet and not a community residential  
761 home within a radius of 1,200 feet of the proposed home. At the  
762 time of home occupancy, the sponsoring agency must notify the  
763 local government that the home is licensed by the licensing  
764 entity. For purposes of local land use and zoning  
765 determinations, this subsection does not affect the legal  
766 nonconforming use status of any community residential home  
767 lawfully permitted and operating as of July 1, 2016.

768 (3)

769 (c) The local government may ~~shall~~ not deny the siting of a  
770 community residential home unless the local government  
771 establishes that the siting of the home at the site selected:

772 1. Does not otherwise conform to existing zoning  
773 regulations applicable to other multifamily uses in the area.

774 2. Does not meet applicable licensing criteria established  
775 and determined by the licensing entity, including requirements  
776 that the home be located to assure the safe care and supervision  
777 of all clients in the home.

778 3. Would result in such a concentration of community  
779 residential homes in the area in proximity to the site selected,  
780 or would result in a combination of such homes with other  
781 residences in the community, such that the nature and character  
782 of the area would be substantially altered. A home that is  
783 located within a radius of 1,200 feet of another existing

29-00804A-25

20251626\_\_

784 community residential home in a multifamily zone shall be an  
785 overconcentration of such homes that substantially alters the  
786 nature and character of the area. A home that is located within  
787 a radius of 500 feet of an area of single-family zoning  
788 substantially alters the nature and character of the area.

789 (4) Community residential homes, including homes of six or  
790 fewer residents which would otherwise meet the definition of a  
791 community residential home, which are licensed by the Department  
792 of Children and Families as a residential child-caring agency as  
793 defined in s. 409.175(2)(1) or located within a planned  
794 residential community are not subject to the proximity  
795 requirements of this section and may be contiguous to each  
796 other. A planned residential community must comply with the  
797 applicable local government's land development code and other  
798 local ordinances. A local government may not impose proximity  
799 limitations between homes within a planned residential community  
800 if such limitations are based solely on the types of residents  
801 anticipated to be living in the community. A local government  
802 shall exclude a home that has six or fewer residents licensed by  
803 the Department of Children and Families as a residential child-  
804 caring agency, as defined in s. 409.175(2)(1), when imposing  
805 proximity limitations on community residential homes licensed by  
806 another licensing entity.

807 Section 14. Paragraph (c) is added to subsection (20) of  
808 section 553.73, Florida Statutes, to read:

809 553.73 Florida Building Code.—

810 (20) The Florida Building Commission may not:

811 (c) Mandate the installation of fire sprinklers or a fire  
812 suppression system in a residential child-caring agency licensed

29-00804A-25

20251626\_\_

813 by the Department of Children and Families under s. 409.175  
814 which operates in a single-family residential property that is  
815 licensed for a capacity of five or fewer children who are  
816 unrelated to the licensee.

817 Section 15. Subsection (12) is added to section 633.208,  
818 Florida Statutes, to read:

819 633.208 Minimum firesafety standards.—

820 (12) Notwithstanding subsection (8), a residential child-  
821 caring agency licensed by the Department of Children and  
822 Families under s. 409.175 which operates in a single-family  
823 residential property that is licensed for a capacity of five or  
824 fewer children who are unrelated to the licensee is not required  
825 to install fire sprinklers or a fire suppression system as long  
826 as the licensee meets the requirements for portable fire  
827 extinguishers, fire alarms, and smoke detectors under this  
828 chapter.

829 Section 16. Subsection (3) of section 937.0201, Florida  
830 Statutes, is amended to read:

831 937.0201 Definitions.—As used in this chapter, the term:

832 (3) "Missing child" means a person younger than 18 years of  
833 age whose temporary or permanent residence is in, or is believed  
834 to be in, this state, whose location has not been determined,  
835 and who has been reported as missing to a law enforcement  
836 agency. The term includes a child who is the subject of a court  
837 order to take the child into the custody of the Department of  
838 Children and Families.

839 Section 17. Subsection (3) of section 937.021, Florida  
840 Statutes, is amended, and subsection (9) is added to that  
841 section, to read:

29-00804A-25

20251626\_\_

842 937.021 Missing child and missing adult reports.—

843 (3) A report that a child or adult is missing must be  
844 accepted by and filed with the law enforcement agency having  
845 jurisdiction in the county or municipality in which the child or  
846 adult was last seen. The filing and acceptance of the report  
847 imposes the duties specified in this section upon the law  
848 enforcement agency receiving the report. This subsection does  
849 not preclude a law enforcement agency from accepting a missing  
850 child or missing adult report when agency jurisdiction cannot be  
851 determined. If agency jurisdiction cannot be determined for  
852 cases in which there is a child who is the subject of a court  
853 order to take the child into the custody of the Department of  
854 Children and Families, the sheriff's office of the county in  
855 which the court order was entered must take jurisdiction.

856 (9) A law enforcement officer or agency may use reasonable  
857 force as necessary to take a missing child who is already in the  
858 custody of the Department of Children and Families or who is the  
859 subject of a court order to take the child into the custody of  
860 the Department of Children and Families.

861 Section 18. Section 402.30501, Florida Statutes, is amended  
862 to read:

863 402.30501 Modification of introductory child care course  
864 for community college credit authorized.—The Department of  
865 Children and Families may modify the 40-clock-hour introductory  
866 course in child care under s. 402.305 or s. 402.3131 to meet the  
867 requirements of articulating the course to community college  
868 credit. Any modification must continue to provide that the  
869 course satisfies the requirements of s. 402.305(2)(d) ~~s.~~  
870 ~~402.305(2)(e)~~.

29-00804A-25

20251626\_\_

871 Section 19. Subsections (3) and (4) of section 1002.57,  
872 Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

873 1002.57 Prekindergarten director credential.—

874 (3) The prekindergarten director credential must meet or  
875 exceed the requirements of the Department of Children and  
876 Families for the child care facility director credential under  
877 s. 402.305(2)(f) ~~s. 402.305(2)(g)~~, and successful completion of  
878 the prekindergarten director credential satisfies these  
879 requirements for the child care facility director credential.

880 (4) The department shall, to the maximum extent  
881 practicable, award credit to a person who successfully completes  
882 the child care facility director credential under s.  
883 402.305(2)(f) ~~s. 402.305(2)(g)~~ for those requirements of the  
884 prekindergarten director credential which are duplicative of  
885 requirements for the child care facility director credential.

886 Section 20. Subsection (1) of section 1002.59, Florida  
887 Statutes, is amended to read:

888 1002.59 Emergent literacy and performance standards  
889 training courses.—

890 (1) The department, in collaboration with the Just Read,  
891 Florida! Office, shall adopt minimum standards for courses in  
892 emergent literacy for prekindergarten instructors. Each course  
893 must consist of 5 clock hours and provide instruction in  
894 strategies and techniques to address the age-appropriate  
895 progress of prekindergarten students in developing emergent  
896 literacy skills, including oral communication, knowledge of  
897 print and letters, phonological and phonemic awareness,  
898 vocabulary and comprehension development, and foundational  
899 background knowledge designed to correlate with the content that

29-00804A-25

20251626\_\_

900 students will encounter in grades K-12, consistent with the  
901 evidence-based content and strategies grounded in the science of  
902 reading identified pursuant to s. 1001.215(7). The course  
903 standards must be reviewed as part of any review of subject  
904 coverage or endorsement requirements in the elementary, reading,  
905 and exceptional student educational areas conducted pursuant to  
906 s. 1012.586. Each course must also provide resources containing  
907 strategies that allow students with disabilities and other  
908 special needs to derive maximum benefit from the Voluntary  
909 Prekindergarten Education Program. Successful completion of an  
910 emergent literacy training course approved under this section  
911 satisfies requirements for approved training in early literacy  
912 and language development under ss. 402.305(2)(d)5. ~~ss.~~  
913 ~~402.305(2)(e)5.~~, 402.313(6), and 402.3131(5).

914 Section 21. Except as otherwise expressly provided in this  
915 act, this act shall take effect July 1, 2025.