

1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to reports of child abuse,
3 abandonment, or neglect; amending s. 39.201, F.S.;
4 requiring the central abuse hotline to electronically
5 transfer certain reports to the appropriate county
6 sheriff's office or local law enforcement agency;
7 requiring certain persons to report certain knowledge
8 or suspicion to the central abuse hotline; requiring
9 the central abuse hotline to accept certain reports
10 and immediately notify the Department of Children and
11 Families to ensure that an onsite protective
12 investigation is promptly initiated; creating a
13 rebuttable presumption; providing methods to rebut
14 such presumption; requiring the department to maintain
15 a specified record under certain circumstances;
16 prohibiting the department from returning a child to
17 the custody of the child's parent unless certain
18 actions are taken and determinations are made by the
19 court; providing an effective date.

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

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23 **Section 1. Paragraph (a) of subsection (1) of section**
24 **39.201, Florida Statutes, is amended, and paragraph (f) is added**
25 **to subsection (3) of that section, to read:**

26 39.201 Required reports of child abuse, abandonment, or
27 neglect, sexual abuse of a child, and juvenile sexual abuse;
28 required reports of death; reports involving a child who has
29 exhibited inappropriate sexual behavior.—

30 (1) MANDATORY REPORTING.—

31 (a)1. A person is required to report immediately to the
32 central abuse hotline established in s. 39.101, in writing,
33 through a call to the toll-free telephone number, or through
34 electronic reporting, if he or she knows, or has reasonable
35 cause to suspect, that any of the following has occurred:

36 a. Child abuse, abandonment, or neglect by a parent or
37 caregiver, which includes, but is not limited to, when a child
38 is abused, abandoned, or neglected by a parent, legal custodian,
39 caregiver, or other person responsible for the child's welfare
40 or when a child is in need of supervision and care and has no
41 parent, legal custodian, or responsible adult relative
42 immediately known and available to provide such supervision and
43 care.

44 b. Child abuse by an adult other than a parent, legal
45 custodian, caregiver, or other person responsible for the
46 child's welfare. The central abuse hotline must immediately
47 electronically transfer such reports to the appropriate county
48 sheriff's office or local law enforcement agency.

49 2. Any person who knows, or has reasonable cause to
50 suspect, that a child is the victim of sexual abuse or juvenile

51 sexual abuse shall report such knowledge or suspicion to the
52 central abuse hotline, including if the alleged incident
53 involves a child who is in the custody of or under the
54 protective supervision of the department.

55 3. Any person who knows, or has reasonable cause to
56 suspect, that a child has been born to a parent who has another
57 child who is in the custody of or under the protective
58 supervision of the department shall report such knowledge or
59 suspicion to the central abuse hotline.

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61 Such reports may be made in writing, through the statewide toll-
62 free telephone number, or through electronic reporting.

63 (3) ADDITIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES RELATED TO REPORTS.—

64 (f) Children born to certain parents.—

65 1. The central abuse hotline must accept reports alleging
66 that a child has been born to a parent who has another child who
67 is in the custody of or under the protective supervision of the
68 department. Such reports require an immediate onsite protective
69 investigation and the central abuse hotline shall immediately
70 notify the department's designated district staff responsible
71 for protective investigations to ensure that an onsite
72 protective investigation is promptly initiated.

73 2. There is a rebuttable presumption that a child born to
74 a parent who has another child in the custody of or under the
75 protective supervision of the department is in immediate danger

76 of abuse, abandonment, or neglect. A parent may rebut such
77 presumption by providing to the department evidence that the
78 parent is successfully participating in department or court-
79 ordered services or other evidence as required by the
80 department.

81 3. If the department determines that the rebuttable
82 presumption has been rebutted and there is not an immediate
83 threat to the child's well-being or safety, the department must
84 maintain a record that includes any previous allegations,
85 complaints, or petitions against the parent and the evidence
86 that the department relied upon in determining that the parent
87 rebutted the presumption.

88 4. If the presumption is not rebutted and a child is taken
89 into the custody of the department after a protective
90 investigation is conducted under s. 39.301, the department may
91 not return the child to the parent's custody until all of the
92 following have occurred:

93 a. A guardian ad litem is appointed for the child.

94 b. The department has conducted a full protective
95 investigation pursuant to this chapter and the results of the
96 protective investigation, including any previous allegations,
97 complaints, or petitions of abuse, abandonment, or neglect
98 against the parent, have been presented to the court at the
99 shelter hearing.

100 c. The court determines by a preponderance of the evidence

101 that the child will be provided a safe home and there is not an
102 immediate threat to the child's well-being or safety.

103 **Section 2.** This act shall take effect July 1, 2026.