

1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to dependent children; amending s.
3 39.4085, F.S.; requiring the Department of Children
4 and Families and each community-based care lead agency
5 to coordinate with certain organizations and meet
6 quarterly for a specified purpose; authorizing such
7 meeting to be in person or via teleconference or other
8 electronic means; requiring such meetings to have a
9 formal agenda; requiring the department and each
10 community-based care lead agency to make certain
11 information available on their respective websites;
12 requiring, beginning in a specified year, the
13 department and each community-based care lead agency
14 to publish on their respective websites a biannual
15 report containing specified information; amending s.
16 409.145, F.S.; providing legislative findings;
17 requiring a caregiver to provide a weekly cash
18 allowance to each child in his or her care beginning
19 when the child attains a certain age; prohibiting a
20 caregiver from withholding a child's allowance as
21 punishment; providing that a child is not expected to
22 use his or her allowance for certain items; providing
23 the amount of such weekly allowance; authorizing the
24 department to adopt rules; providing an effective
25 date.

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

Section 1. Subsection (6) is added to section 39.4085, Florida Statutes, to read:

39.4085 Goals for dependent children; responsibilities; education; Office of the Children's Ombudsman.—

(6) (a) The department shall coordinate with organizations that are focused on empowering children with lived experience. The department and such organizations must meet quarterly, at a minimum, in person or via teleconference or other electronic means to solicit input on ways to address challenges and opportunities for children in the child welfare system. Each meeting must have a formal agenda and such agenda and the minutes from each meeting must be made available on the department's website.

(b) Each community-based care lead agency shall coordinate with organizations that are focused on empowering children with lived experience. The community-based care lead agency and such organizations must meet quarterly, at a minimum, in person or via teleconference or other electronic means to solicit input on ways to address challenges and opportunities for children in the child welfare system. Each meeting must have a formal agenda and such agenda and the minutes from each meeting must be made available on the community-based care lead agency's website.

51 (c) By February 1 and August 1 of each year, beginning in
52 2027, the department and each community-based care lead agency
53 must make publicly accessible on their respective websites a
54 report that outlines how the department and the community-based
55 care lead agencies have implemented the suggestions of the
56 organizations based on the meetings required in paragraphs (a)
57 and (b).

58 **Section 2. Subsection (5) of section 409.145, Florida**
59 **Statutes, is renumbered as subsection (6), paragraph (b) of**
60 **subsection (2) is amended, and a new subsection (5) is added to**
61 **that section, to read:**

62 409.145 Care of children; "reasonable and prudent parent"
63 standard.—The child welfare system of the department shall
64 operate as a coordinated community-based system of care which
65 empowers all caregivers for children in foster care to provide
66 quality parenting, including approving or disapproving a child's
67 participation in activities based on the caregiver's assessment
68 using the "reasonable and prudent parent" standard.

69 (2) REASONABLE AND PRUDENT PARENT STANDARD.—

70 (b) Application of standard of care.—

71 1. Every child who comes into out-of-home care pursuant to
72 this chapter is entitled to participate in age-appropriate
73 extracurricular, enrichment, and social activities and to
74 receive a weekly cash allowance for personal use in accordance
75 with subsection (5).

76 2. Each caregiver shall use the reasonable and prudent
77 parent standard in determining whether to give permission for a
78 child living in out-of-home care to participate in
79 extracurricular, enrichment, or social activities. When using
80 the reasonable and prudent parent standard, the caregiver must
81 consider:

82 a. The child's age, maturity, and developmental level to
83 maintain the overall health and safety of the child.

84 b. The potential risk factors and the appropriateness of
85 the extracurricular, enrichment, or social activity.

86 c. The best interest of the child, based on information
87 known by the caregiver.

88 d. The importance of encouraging the child's emotional and
89 developmental growth.

90 e. The importance of providing the child with the most
91 family-like living experience possible.

92 f. The behavioral history of the child and the child's
93 ability to safely participate in the proposed activity.

94 (5) CASH ALLOWANCE.—

95 (a) The Legislature finds that receiving a cash allowance
96 is a critical aspect of normalcy for a child. A cash allowance
97 teaches a child the value and use of money and it promotes
98 independence, responsibility, and decisionmaking. A caregiver is
99 also encouraged to offer the opportunity to earn money through
100 chores to a child placed in his or her care and to help such

101 child obtain employment if the child wants to be employed.

102 (b) A caregiver must provide each child in his or her
103 care, beginning when the child attains 6 years of age, a weekly
104 cash allowance that is not tied to the child's behavior or the
105 completion of his or her chores. A caregiver may not withhold
106 the child's allowance as a form of punishment. A child is not
107 expected to use his or her allowance to purchase personal
108 hygiene items, school supplies, clothing, or other necessities
109 that are the responsibility of the child's caregiver. The
110 minimum allowance is as follows:

111 1. For children ages 6 to 12 years, \$1 for each year of
112 age per week.

113 2. For children ages 13 to 17 years, \$20 per week.

114 (c) The department may adopt rules to implement this
115 subsection.

116 **Section 3.** This act shall take effect July 1, 2026.