

1 AN ACT concerning children.

2 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,**
3 **represented in the General Assembly:**

4 Section 5. The Children and Family Services Act is amended
5 by adding Section 6d as follows:

6 (20 ILCS 505/6d new)

7 Sec. 6d. Alternate care plans for children and youth.

8 (a) The General Assembly finds that:

9 (1) Children entering the child welfare system
10 experience trauma related not only to abuse and neglect but
11 also to out of home placement.

12 (2) Untreated, the effects of trauma escalate over
13 time.

14 (3) Placement instability causes service delays and
15 interruptions that jeopardize children's physical and
16 emotional well-being.

17 (4) A significant portion of children entering
18 residential programs designed to treat complex clinical or
19 development needs do so only after multiple failed foster
20 care placements and without any intensive service
21 intervention.

22 (5) Relevant and timely service intervention has a
23 direct impact on the quality of life for children in care,
24 the length of time the children are in care and the
25 long-term outcomes when the children leave care.

26 (b) To ensure that children and youth have efficient and
27 effective access to interventions, programs, and services when
28 needs are identified, the Department shall implement
29 procedures for the establishment of regionally based,
30 multi-disciplinary teams that shall be responsible for
31 developing and ensuring the implementation of plans for youth
32 in care. The Department shall promulgate rules and procedures

1 for the appointment of the teams and for use of uniform
2 assessment tools.

3 (c) The teams shall:

4 (1) Use a team-decision making process that
5 collaboratively determines the optimal plan for the youth.

6 (2) Focus on the current and immediate clinical and
7 social needs of the youth.

8 (3) Administer a uniform assessment tool, as provided
9 for in Department rules, to assist in determining the
10 child's current level of functioning and well-being.

11 (4) Be empowered to identify youth's service and
12 placement needs without restriction to program type.

13 (5) Identify the best plan to meet the child's need
14 based on the individual strengths, needs, and
15 circumstances of the child's case.

16 (d) The Department shall establish criteria for
17 identifying cases and shall define events that require a
18 meeting of participants in addition to the appointed team
19 members. The criteria or events shall include, at a minimum,
20 all children or youths who have experienced 2 unplanned
21 placement disruptions within a period of 18 months.

22 (e) Participants in a meeting required by the Department
23 shall include:

24 (1) individuals with relevant current information
25 about the child or youth;

26 (2) individuals with a professional capacity that is
27 critical to informed, sound decision-making of the team
28 about the individual youth;

29 (3) current foster parents or other caregiver, the
30 caseworker, and supervisor;

31 (4) depending on the child's age and presenting issues,
32 the youth; and

33 (5) if appropriate, a psychologist, early childhood
34 specialist, education advisor, nurse, therapist, any
35 existing SOC provider of services, the child's guardian ad
36 litem, probation personnel, and any relevant Department of

1 Children and Family Services specialist.

2 (f) The biological families of the child may be included at
3 the meeting, where appropriate.

4 (g) The Department may assign staff of the Department to
5 coordinate, prepare, and facilitate the team meetings.

6 (h) The Department shall develop quality assurance
7 mechanisms to track the appropriateness of service
8 recommendations and implementation performance. The quality
9 assurance mechanisms shall include measures to collect data as
10 to timeliness and effectiveness of the team's decision, as well
11 as service gaps that are identified as the byproduct of these
12 meetings.

13 (i) By January 15th of each year, the Department shall
14 report to the General Assembly identified service gaps and
15 recommendations for addressing the identified service needs.