



**Sub. H.B. 214\***

127th General Assembly  
(As Reported by H. Juvenile and Family Law)

**Reps. Wagner and Combs, Seitz, J. McGregor, Stebelton, Brown**

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**BILL SUMMARY**

- Increases from 24 to 36 hours the amount of preplacement training for family foster homes.
- Allows a foster caregiver to fulfill up to 20% of the required amount of continuing training by teaching training classes or mentoring other foster caregivers.
- Alters the timing and form of reimbursement to foster caregivers for completing preplacement and continuing training.
- Establishes a procedure by which two county boards of mental retardation and developmental disabilities must reach an agreement regarding how to provide services to a foster child who moves from one county to another.
- Requires the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) to partner with the Ohio Department of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities to offer joint cross system briefings to better educate the professionals of both systems.
- Permits a juvenile judge to enter into an agreement with ODJFS for the purpose of reimbursing the court specified foster care related costs incurred on behalf of a child who has been determined to be at serious risk of removal from the home and for whom the court has undertaken a plan of reasonable efforts to prevent such removal.

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\* This analysis was prepared before the report of the House Juvenile and Family Law Committee appeared in the House Journal. Note that the list of co-sponsors and the legislative history may be incomplete.

- Requires the Director of ODJFS to appoint two current certified foster caregivers as additional members of the Ohio Child Welfare Training Program steering committee.
- Contingent on available funding, requires ODJFS to implement and oversee use of a Child Placement Level of Care Tool, on a pilot basis, to assess a child's placement needs when the child must be removed from a home and cannot be placed with a relative or kin not certified as a foster caregiver.
- Requires an independent evaluation of the Child Placement Level of Care Tool, an Ohio Department of Mental Health (ODMH) calibration study using both the Tool and the Ohio Scales Tool (which is used by ODMH to measure outcomes for youth), and an ODMH continuity of care analysis.
- Allows ODJFS to seek federal approval through the United States Department of Health and Human Services to include within funding under Title IV-E of the Social Security Act an additional category of foster care certification for placements in which the child has an existing relationship with the foster caregiver.
- Reenacts the Interstate Compact *on* the Placement of Children that was repealed by Am. Sub. S.B. 238 of the 126th General Assembly as a continuation of that interstate compact until the new Interstate Compact *for* the Placement of Children takes effect.

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## CONTENT AND OPERATION

### Training of foster caregivers

#### Increase in amount of preplacement training

Existing law requires foster caregivers to complete training prior to the placement of foster children in the home. The amount of training hours required depends upon whether the home is a family foster home or a specialized foster home.<sup>1</sup> A family foster home must complete at least 24 hours of preplacement training, and a specialized foster home must complete at least 36 hours.

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<sup>1</sup> A specialized foster home is a foster home that either provides specialized medical services designed to meet the needs of children with intensive health care needs or

The bill will increase the minimum number of preplacement training hours required for a family foster home from 24 hours to 36 hours. (R.C. 5103.031.)

### **Fulfillment of continuing training hours**

Existing law requires foster caregivers to complete a minimum number of continuing training hours to remain certified. A foster caregiver providing a family foster home must complete at least 40 hours of continuing training every two years, and a foster caregiver providing a specialized foster home must complete at least 60 hours of continuing training every two years. (R.C. 5103.032.) The public children services agency (PCSA), private child placing agency (PCPA), or private noncustodial agency (PNA) acting as a recommending agency for a foster caregiver must develop and implement a written needs assessment and continuing training plan for the foster caregiver, and the training classes must be approved by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS). (R.C. 5103.035 and 5103.0316.)

The bill allows a foster caregiver to complete up to 20% of the foster caregiver's continuing training hours by teaching one or more training classes for other foster caregivers or by providing mentorship services to other foster caregivers. The PCSA, PCPA, or PNA acting as a recommending agency for a foster caregiver must include the number of hours that a foster caregiver is permitted to complete in this fashion on the foster caregiver's needs assessment and continuing training plan. The bill also requires ODJFS to adopt rules under R.C. Chapter 119. (the Administrative Procedure Act) as necessary for the qualification of foster caregivers to provide training or mentorship services to other foster caregivers. (R.C. 5103.032 and 5103.035.)

### **Reimbursement for training**

Existing law requires a PCSA, PCPA, or PNA acting as a recommending agency for a foster caregiver to pay each foster caregiver a stipend to reimburse the foster caregiver for attending a preplacement or continuing training program. The bill changes the form of payment for attending preplacement training programs from the stipend rate to a lump sum payment. The stipend rate remains for the completion of continuing training. (R.C. 5103.0312.)

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incorporates special rehabilitative services designed to treat the specific needs of children who have been emotionally or behaviorally disturbed, chemically dependent, mentally retarded, developmentally disabled, or who otherwise have exceptional needs. A family foster home is any foster home that does not fall under the definition of a specialized foster home. (R.C. 5103.02.)

Existing law also requires ODJFS to compensate PCPAs and PNAs for the cost of procuring or operating preplacement and continuing training programs for foster parents. These agencies must be compensated for each hour of training provided or received. The bill limits agency to compensation to an allowance to reimburse the agency for the minimum amount of preplacement and continuing training required; an agency may not provide additional training hours and receive additional reimbursement from ODJFS. (R.C. 5103.0313.)

Currently, individuals who attend a preplacement training program receive their reimbursement when they receive a foster home certificate from ODJFS. Under the bill, ODJFS must adopt rules regarding the release of lump sum stipends to individuals who have attended a preplacement training program. (R.C. 5103.0312.)

**Services provided by county boards of mental retardation and developmental disabilities**

The bill provides a method for resolution of disputes in situations in which a foster child is in need of assessment for eligible services or is receiving services from a county board of mental retardation and developmental disabilities and is subsequently placed with a foster caregiver in another county. The agency that places the child in the new foster home must inform the county board in the new county that a foster child who has previously been receiving services from another county or who was in need of assessment for eligible services has been placed in the new county. The agency must then provide the name and other identifying information regarding that child, and the name of the child's previous county of residence.

Upon receiving the notice that the child is in need of assessment for eligible services or was receiving services from a county board of mental retardation and developmental disabilities in the previous county, the county board in the new county must communicate with the county board of the previous county to determine how to provide services for the foster child in accordance with each board's plan and priorities.

If the two county boards are unable to reach an agreement within ten days of the child's placement, the county board in the new county must send notice to the Ohio Department of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (ODMRDD) of the failure to agree. Within ten days of receiving notice that the county boards could not reach an agreement, ODMRDD may decide that one, or both, of the county boards must provide services in accordance with that board's plan and priorities. (R.C. 5126.04.)

### **Joint cross system briefings**

The bill also requires ODJFS to partner with ODMRDD to offer joint cross system briefings to better educate the professionals of both systems for more effective service delivery for dually involved children and families. The joint cross system briefings must be conducted regularly for one year after the effective date of the bill and serve as a platform for conducting forums and developing training curriculums for foster caregivers that care for mentally retarded and developmentally disabled children. (Section 5.)

### **Reimbursements to juvenile courts**

Existing law allows a juvenile judge to enter into an agreement with ODJFS for the purpose of reimbursing the court for foster care maintenance costs and associated administrative and training costs incurred on behalf of a child eligible for payments under Title IV-E of the Social Security Act<sup>2</sup> and who is in the temporary or permanent custody of the court or subject to certain dispositions of the court. Under the bill, the agreement also may be for the purpose of reimbursing such costs on behalf of a child who has been determined to be at serious risk of removal from the home and for whom the court has undertaken a plan of reasonable efforts to prevent such removal. (R.C. 2151.152.)

### **The Ohio Child Welfare Training Program**

The Ohio Child Welfare Training Program in ODJFS provides the various training classes required for certification as a foster caregiver or a PCSA caseworker or supervisor, and for adoption assessors who conduct home studies (R.C. 5103.30). Leading this program is a steering committee, currently comprised of employees of ODJFS, one representative of each of the regional training centers located throughout the state, one representative of a statewide organization that represents the interests of PCSAs, one representative of the Ohio Child Welfare Training Program coordinator, and employees of PCSAs.

The bill requires ODJFS to appoint two additional members to the steering committee. These new members must be current foster caregivers certified by ODJFS. (R.C. 5103.391.)

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<sup>2</sup> 94 Stat. 501, 42 U.S.C. 670 (1980).

## **Child Placement Level of Care Tool**

### **Development**

Contingent upon the availability of funding, the bill requires ODJFS to implement and oversee the use of a Child Placement Level of Care Tool. The Tool will be used to evaluate a child's behavior, history, psychological state, and the involvement of service systems, in an effort to better assess a child's placement needs when a child must be removed from the child's own home and cannot be placed with a relative or kin not certified as a foster caregiver. This Tool must be developed by the participating counties and implemented by ODJFS on a pilot basis. The pilot program must be developed with the participating counties. The participating counties will include Cuyahoga County and up to nine additional counties selected by ODJFS. Participation in this pilot program will be voluntary; a selected county must agree to participate. ODJFS may adopt rules in accordance with R.C. Chapter 119. (the Administrative Procedure Act) to carry out the pilot program and must seek maximum federal financial participation to support the pilot program and its evaluation. The pilot program will be conducted between July 1, 2008, and December 31, 2009. (Section 3(A), (B), (F), and (G)(1).)

### **Evaluation**

Using competitive bidding, ODJFS must provide for an independent evaluation of the pilot program to rate the following: success in placement stability, length of stay, and other outcomes for children; costs; worker satisfaction; and any other criteria that ODJFS determines will be useful in the consideration of statewide implementation. The evaluation design must include a comparison of data to historical outcomes or control counties, a retrospective data review of Cuyahoga County's use of the Tool, and a prospective data evaluation in each of the pilot counties. (Section 3(C).)

### **Coordination with the Ohio Department of Mental Health**

The Ohio Department of Mental Health (ODMH) must conduct a study of the children placed using the Child Placement Level of Care Tool, which must run concurrent with ODJFS Child Placement Level of Care Tool pilot program. This study will use both the Child Placement Level of Care Tool and the Ohio Scales Tool (the Ohio Youth Problems, Functioning, ROLES, and Marker Scales (Ohio Scales, Worker Form) used by ODMH to measure outcomes for youth ages 5 to 18) in a simultaneous collection of information about children at the time a placement decision is made. Simultaneous data collection using the Ohio Scales and the Placement Level of Care Tool must be coordinated through collaboration between the ODMH and the independent evaluator to ensure study design integrity and cost efficiency.

Based on this data collection from the Ohio Scales and the Child Placement Level of Care Tool, the study must focus on analyzing any correlations between the initial placement outcomes and initial scores of problem severity and behavioral health functioning. Through a data sharing agreement with the designated independent evaluator, ODMH must also analyze data from subsequent administrations of the Ohio Scales Tool and changes in placement level of care for any correlations.

Upon completion of the study, ODMH must send a copy of the results of the study to the independent evaluator, who will then send a copy of the evaluator's initial evaluation of the Child Placement Level of Care Tool, the Ohio Department of Mental Health's calibration study, and the continuity of care analysis to ODJFS. (Section 3(D), (E), and (G)(2).)

#### **Title IV-E funding eligibility**

The bill grants ODJFS authority to seek federal approval through the United States Department of Health and Human Services to include within funding under Title IV-E of the Social Security Act an additional category of foster care certification, and simplified standards for that certification, for placements in which the child has an existing relationship with the foster caregiver (Section 4).

#### **The Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children**

Am. Sub. S.B. 238 of the 126th General Assembly repealed the Interstate Compact *on* the Placement of Children and replaced it with the Interstate Compact *for* the Placement of Children. This new compact has not yet taken effect because not enough states have enacted it; it will not take effect until 35 states enact the new compact, and Ohio is the only state to have enacted it.<sup>3</sup> As a result, the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children no longer appears in the Revised Code, although it remains in effect due to the fact that Article IX of the Compact contained a two-year delay of any repeal.

The bill reenacts the old compact, while retaining the new compact in the event of its future effectiveness. The bill states that the enactment of the old compact is a continuation of the interstate compact of the same name that was repealed by Am. Sub. S.B. 238 of the 126th General Assembly and that its provisions will no longer apply once the new compact becomes effective. (Sections 6, 7, 8, and 9.)

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.csg.org/programs/ncic/InterstateCompactforthePlacementofChildren.aspx>.

**Technical changes**

The bill corrects two technical problems created by the enactment of Am. Sub. S.B. 238 of the 126th General Assembly. Sections 5153.122 and 5153.123 of the Revised Code referred to incorrect amounts of training hours. The bill corrects these references.

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**HISTORY**

ACTION	DATE
Introduced	05-08-07
Reported, H. Juvenile & Family Law	---

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