

House Bill No. 679

An act relating to foster care; amending s. 409.145, F.S.; authorizing the Department of Children and Family Services to continue providing foster care services to certain individuals who are enrolled full-time in a degree-granting program in a postsecondary educational institution; specifying circumstances under which such services shall be terminated; providing an effective date.

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

Section 1. Paragraphs (a) and (b) of subsection (3) of section 409.145, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

409.145 Care of children.—

(3)(a) The department is authorized to continue to provide the services of the children's foster care program to individuals 18 to 21 years of age who are enrolled in high school, in a program leading to a high school equivalency diploma as defined in s. 229.814, or in a full-time career education program, and to continue to provide services of the children's foster care program to individuals 18 to 23 years of age who are enrolled full-time in a post-secondary institution granting a degree, a certificate, or an applied technology diploma, if the following requirements are met:

1. The individual was committed to the legal custody of the department for placement in foster care as a dependent child;
2. All other resources have been thoroughly explored, and it can be clearly established that there are no alternative resources for placement; and
3. A written service agreement which specifies responsibilities and expectations for all parties involved has been signed by a representative of the department, the individual, and the foster parent or licensed child-caring agency providing the placement resources.

(b) The services of the foster care program shall continue for those individuals 18 to 21 years of age only for the period of time the individual is continuously enrolled in high school, in a program leading to a high school equivalency diploma as defined in s. 229.814, or in a full-time career education program; and shall continue for those individuals 18 to 23 years of age only for the period of time the individual is continuously enrolled full-time in a post-secondary institution granting a degree, a certificate, or an applied technology diploma. Services shall be terminated upon completion of or withdrawal or permanent expulsion from high school, the program leading to a high school equivalency diploma, ~~or~~ the full-time career education program, or the post-secondary institution granting a degree, a certificate, or an applied technology diploma.

Section 2. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law.

Approved by the Governor June 2, 2000.

Filed in Office Secretary of State June 2, 2000.