

CHAPTER 2023-254

Committee Substitute for Committee Substitute for Committee Substitute for Senate Bill No. 1064

An act relating to trauma screening for children removed from caregivers; amending s. 39.523, F.S.; revising legislative findings; requiring the Department of Children and Families or community-based care lead agency to conduct a trauma screening after a child's removal from his or her home within a certain timeframe; requiring the department or community-based care lead agency to refer the child for a trauma assessment, if indicated appropriate or necessary by the screening, within a certain timeframe; requiring the department or community-based lead agency to refer the child to services and intervention, as needed; requiring that the trauma screening, assessment, and services and intervention be integrated into the child's overall treatment planning and services; requiring the department or the community-based care lead agency to provide certain information and support for a specified purpose; providing an effective date.

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

Section 1. Subsections (1) and paragraph (a) of subsection (2) of section 39.523, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

39.523 Placement in out-of-home care.—

(1) LEGISLATIVE FINDINGS AND INTENT.—

(a) The Legislature finds that it is a basic tenet of child welfare practice and the law that a child be placed in the least restrictive, most family-like setting available in close proximity to the home of his or her parents which meets the needs of the child, and that a child be placed in a permanent home in a timely manner.

(b) The Legislature ~~also~~ finds that there is an association between placements that do not meet the needs of the child and adverse outcomes for the child, that mismatching placements to children's needs has been identified as a factor that negatively impacts placement stability, and that identifying the right placement for each child requires effective assessment.

(c) The Legislature also finds that the timely identification of and therapeutic response to acute presentation of symptoms indicative of trauma can reduce adverse outcomes for a child, aid in the identification of services to enhance initial placement stability and of supports to caregivers, and reduce placement disruption.

(d) It is the intent of the Legislature that whenever a child is unable to safely remain at home with a parent, the most appropriate available out-of-home placement shall be chosen after an assessment of the child's needs and the availability of caregivers qualified to meet the child's needs.

(2) ASSESSMENT AND PLACEMENT.—When any child is removed from a home and placed in out-of-home care, a comprehensive placement assessment process shall be completed in accordance with s. 39.4022 to determine the level of care needed by the child and match the child with the most appropriate placement.

(a) ~~In accordance with rules adopted by the department, the department or community-based care lead agency or subcontracted agency with the responsibility for assessment and placement must:~~

1. Coordinate a multidisciplinary team staffing as established in s. 39.4022 with the necessary participants for the stated purpose of the staffing.

2. Conduct a trauma screening as soon as practicable after the child's removal from his or her home but no later than 21 days after the shelter hearing. If indicated as appropriate or necessary by the screening, the department or community-based care lead agency must, at a minimum:

a. Promptly refer the child to appropriate trauma assessment, which must be completed within 30 days, and if appropriate, services and intervention as needed. To the extent possible, the trauma screening, the assessment, and services and intervention must be integrated into the child's overall behavioral health treatment planning and services.

b. In accordance with s. 409.1415(2)(b)3.f., provide information and support, which may include, but need not be limited to, consultation, coaching, training, and referrals to services, to the caregiver of the child to help the caregiver respond to and care for the child in a trauma-informed and therapeutic manner.

Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2023.

Approved by the Governor June 16, 2023.

Filed in Office Secretary of State June 16, 2023.