

## CCS HCS SB 25 -- SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AND MINORS

This bill changes the laws regarding services for children and minors administered by the Department of Social Services.

### CHILD ABUSE INVESTIGATIONS

The Children's Division within the department is prohibited from closing a child abuse or neglect investigation if the child who is the subject of the investigation dies during the investigation until any separate investigation by the division regarding the death is completed.

### RIGHTS OF FOSTER PARENTS

The division and its contractors are required to:

- (1) Treat foster parents in accordance with the ethical standards established in the Social Workers' Ethical Responsibilities to Colleagues, within the National Association of Social Workers' code of ethics, so that foster parents are recognized as part of a child welfare team and not as clients;
- (2) Provide foster parents written notification of their rights when initially licensed or at the time of renewal;
- (3) Schedule regular opportunities for foster parent training as determined by the Missouri State Foster Care and Youth Advisory Board;
- (4) Give foster parents and potential adoptive parents all pertinent information, including medical and mental health records, placements, behaviors, family history, and reports of abuse regarding a child to protect the foster or adoptive family;
- (5) Inform foster parents in a timely manner of all team meetings regarding licensure status or children placed in their home;
- (6) Establish procedures that foster parents must follow for requesting and using respite care;
- (7) Allow foster parents to share otherwise confidential information with practitioners and school personnel that is necessary to make safe and appropriate decisions regarding the care for the physical health and educational needs of the child;
- (8) Schedule visits at a time that is convenient for all parties involved;

- (9) Provide foster parents with training that addresses:
- (a) Cultural competence issues such as physical appearance, religious and cultural practices, and community resources that can provide additional training; and
  - (b) Policies and procedures for licensing, foster care regulations, and the adoption process;
- (10) Give foster parents first consideration when placing a child who is not placed with a relative;
- (11) Allow fair and impartial time for foster parents to address licensure, case management decisions, and delivery of service issues; and
- (12) Provide written documentation of the division's policies to foster parents upon their request.

Foster parents will be required to:

- (1) Follow the discipline policies of the division;
- (2) Give two weeks' notice when requesting the removal of a child;
- (3) Notify the caseworker within 60 days after being informed of an adoption inquiry if they would like to adopt a foster child; and
- (4) Be given at least two weeks' notice by the courts before any court hearing regarding a child in their care.

#### CHILD SUPPORT

The department director is required to notify a parent of his or her child support responsibility if there is a current court order. Future child support payments will be computed following the rules established by the Missouri Supreme Court. Only a court of competent jurisdiction may approve a change to a child support order judgment by an administrative agency.

Currently, the Child Support Division may certify a person who owes more than \$5,000 in child support to the federal agency for the denial, suspension, or limitation of a passport. The bill lowers that amount to \$2,500. The division is allowed to open a case based on another state's request for assistance and to collect past due support when a caretaker relative was on assistance or the child was in state custody. The Missouri Gaming Commission is authorized to intercept certain gambling

winnings of individuals who owe past due support or state debt.

A parent will be allowed to stop paying child support when his or her child reaches 21 years of age or is at least 18 years of age and receives failing grades in at least half of his or her course load in any one semester when enrolled in at least 12 credit hours of higher education.