

HB 2116 -- FOSTER CARE SERVICES FOR YOUTH WITH ELEVATED NEEDS

SPONSOR: Thomas

This bill establishes two categories of children in foster care in the state who have serious medical, emotional, or behavioral problems, elevated needs-level A and elevated needs-level B. Youth who are categorized as elevated needs-level A require significantly greater structure and supervision and are significantly less able to assume responsibility for their daily care. Youth who are categorized as elevated needs-level B require the 24-hour availability of a highly skilled level-B resource foster parent.

For situations in which there is a sibling group with three or more siblings who are categorized as youth with elevated needs-level A and the group is placed together in a foster care home, the bill provides that siblings within that group who have been categorized as youth with elevated needs-level A will be categorized as youth with elevated needs-level B upon placement without requiring an elevated needs assessment.

Re-categorization shall occur provided that up to 90 days after placement into the foster care home or either the finalization of adoption or August 28, 2024, whichever occurs first, the foster care family or adoptive parent submit a form to the Children's Division, within the Department of Social Services, requesting the re-categorization of the group and a reimbursement equivalent to the current rate of the service for the amount to which the children would have otherwise remained eligible during the time frame the children were in the home and improperly categorized.

For situations in which there is a sibling group consisting of three or more siblings within that group who are categorized as traditional foster youth, but in which at least two of whom are later categorized as youth with elevated needs-level A, the bill provides that all siblings in that group shall be categorized as youth with elevated needs-Level A.