

HB 1291 -- YOUTH IN THE CUSTODY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

SPONSOR: Parker

Under this bill, the Department of Social Services must establish a program to provide a comprehensive system of service delivery, education, and residential care for youth with severe behavioral challenges or severe developmental disabilities. In order to be eligible for the program, a youth must be under 21 years of age, in the custody of the Department of Social Services, and a team of professionals in the Department must have made a determination that the needs of the youth cannot be met with existing programs. A youth under 21 years of age in a voluntary placement agreement may qualify for the program if he or she otherwise meets the requirements of this bill and resources are available.

The Department has the authority to contract with qualified services providers to provide services to the youth under this bill. The service providers must be licensed or accredited in their respective fields of service, based in Missouri, and not-for-profit entities with a record of success in the areas for which they shall provide services and shall have the same qualified immunities from civil liability as other private contractors with the Department.

The Department is authorized to enter into memoranda of understanding with any facility or campus under state ownership, including those owned and operated by the Division of Youth Services and the Department of Mental Health, that are appropriate for the youth being served, including facilities that are under-utilized or vacant.

This bill is the same as SB 526 (2025).