

26 ~~funding for all investigative, supervisory, and clerical~~
27 ~~positions; training; all associated equipment; furnishings; and~~
28 ~~other fixed capital items. The contract must specify whether the~~
29 ~~department will continue to perform part or none of the child~~
30 ~~protective investigations during the initial year. The sheriffs~~
31 ~~may either conduct the investigations themselves or may, in~~
32 ~~turn, subcontract with law enforcement officials or with~~
33 ~~properly trained employees of private agencies to conduct~~
34 ~~investigations related to neglect cases only. If such a~~
35 ~~subcontract is awarded, the sheriff must take full~~
36 ~~responsibility for any safety decision made by the subcontractor~~
37 ~~and must immediately respond with law enforcement staff to any~~
38 ~~situation that requires removal of a child due to a condition~~
39 ~~that poses an immediate threat to the child's life. The contract~~
40 ~~must specify whether the services are to be performed by~~
41 ~~departmental employees or by persons determined by the sheriff.~~
42 ~~During this initial year, the department is responsible for~~
43 ~~quality assurance, and the department retains the responsibility~~
44 ~~for the performance of all child protective investigations. The~~
45 ~~department must identify any barriers to transferring the entire~~
46 ~~responsibility for child protective services to the sheriffs'~~
47 ~~offices and must pursue avenues for removing any such barriers~~
48 ~~by means including, but not limited to, applying for federal~~
49 ~~waivers. By January 15, 1999, the department shall submit to the~~
50 ~~President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of~~

51 ~~Representatives, and the chairs of the Senate and House~~
52 ~~committees that oversee departmental activities a report that~~
53 ~~describes any remaining barriers, including any that pertain to~~
54 ~~funding and related administrative issues. Unless the~~
55 ~~Legislature, on the basis of that report or other pertinent~~
56 ~~information, acts to block a transfer of the entire~~
57 ~~responsibility for child protective investigations to the~~
58 ~~sheriffs' offices, the sheriffs of Pasco County, Manatee County,~~
59 ~~Broward County, and Pinellas County, beginning in fiscal year~~
60 ~~1999-2000, shall assume the entire responsibility for such~~
61 ~~services, as provided in subsection (3).~~

62 (2)~~(3)~~(a) The ~~Beginning in fiscal year 1999-2000,~~ the
63 sheriffs of Pasco County, Manatee County, Broward County, Walton
64 County, and Pinellas County have the responsibility to provide
65 all child protective investigations in their respective
66 counties. ~~The Beginning in fiscal year 2000-2001,~~ the Department
67 of Children and Families is authorized to enter into grant
68 agreements with sheriffs of other counties to perform child
69 protective investigations in their respective counties.

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