

THE FLORIDA SENATE
2025 SUMMARY OF LEGISLATION PASSED
Committee on Children, Families, and Elder Affairs

SB 1286 — Harming or Neglecting Children

by Senators Grall and Sharief

The bill amends the definition of harm and neglect of a child in both dependency and criminal law to allow caregivers to let a sufficiently mature child partake in independent, unsupervised activities without considering these actions as harm or neglect of a child.

For dependency law, the bill considers independent, unsupervised activities as harm only if the child is subjected to obvious danger of which the caregiver knew or should have known, or the child cannot exercise the reasonable judgment required to avoid serious harm upon responding to physical or emotional crises.

The bill considers independent, unsupervised activities as neglect only if such activities constitute reckless conduct that endangers the health or safety of the child.

For criminal law, the bill amends the definition of neglect of a child to add a willful standard in a caregiver's failure or omission to provide a child with the necessary services to maintain the child's physical and mental health and excludes independent, unsupervised activities that a child engages in from the definition of criminal neglect of a child, unless the activities constitute a willful and wanton conduct that endangers the health or safety of the child.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.

Vote: Senate 36-0; House 116-0