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LEGISLATIVE ACTION

Senate

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House

Appropriations Subcommittee on Health and Human Services
(Garcia) recommended the following:

Senate Amendment (with title amendment)

Delete everything after the enacting clause
and insert:

Section 1. Effective January 1, 2019, section 39.4015,
Florida Statutes, is created to read:

39.4015 Family finding.—

(1) LEGISLATIVE FINDINGS AND INTENT.—

(a) The Legislature finds that every child who is in out-
of-home care has the goal of finding a permanent home, whether



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11 achieved by reunifying the child with his or her parents or
12 finding another permanent connection, such as adoption or legal
13 guardianship with a relative or nonrelative who has a
14 significant relationship with the child.

15 (b) The Legislature finds that while legal permanency is
16 important to a child in out-of-home care, emotional permanency
17 helps increase the likelihood that children will achieve
18 stability and well-being and successfully transition to
19 independent adulthood.

20 (c) The Legislature also finds that research has
21 consistently shown that placing a child within his or her own
22 family reduces the trauma of being removed from his or her home,
23 is less likely to result in placement disruptions, and enhances
24 prospects for finding a permanent family if the child cannot
25 return home.

26 (d) The Legislature further finds that the primary purpose
27 of family finding is to facilitate legal and emotional
28 permanency for children who are in out-of-home care by finding
29 and engaging their relatives.

30 (e) It is the intent of the Legislature that every child in
31 out-of-home care be afforded the advantages that can be gained
32 from the use of family finding to establish caring and long-term
33 or permanent connections and relationships for children and
34 youth in out-of-home care, as well as to establish a long-term
35 emotional support network with family members and other adults
36 who may not be able to take the child into their home but who
37 want to stay connected with the child.

38 (2) DEFINITIONS.—As used in this section, the term:

39 (a) "Diligent efforts" means the use of methods and



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40 techniques including, but not limited to, interviews with
41 immediate and extended family and kin, genograms, eco-mapping,
42 case mining, cold calls, and specialized computer searches.

43 (b) "Family finding" means an intensive relative search and
44 engagement technique used in identifying family and other close
45 adults for children in out-of-home care and involving them in
46 developing and carrying out a plan for the emotional and legal
47 permanency of a child.

48 (c) "Family group decisionmaking" is a generic term that
49 includes a number of approaches in which family members and
50 fictive kin are brought together to make decisions about how to
51 care for their children and develop a plan for services. The
52 term includes family team conferencing, family team meetings,
53 family group conferencing, family team decisionmaking, family
54 unity meetings, and team decisionmaking, which may consist of
55 several phases and employ a trained facilitator or coordinator.

56 (d) "Fictive kin" means an individual who is unrelated to
57 the child by either birth or marriage, but has such a close
58 emotional relationship with the child that he or she may be
59 considered part of the family.

60 (3) FAMILY-FINDING PROGRAM.—The department, in
61 collaboration with sheriffs' offices that conduct child
62 protective investigations and community-based care lead
63 agencies, shall develop a formal family-finding program to be
64 implemented statewide by child protective investigators and
65 community-based care lead agencies.

66 (a) Family finding is required as soon as a child comes to
67 the attention of the department and throughout the duration of
68 the case, and finding and engaging with as many family members



69 and fictive kin as possible for each child who may help with
70 care or support for the child is considered a best practice. The
71 department or community-based care lead agency must specifically
72 document strategies taken to locate and engage relatives and
73 kin. Strategies of engagement may include, but are not limited
74 to, asking the relatives and kin to:

- 75 1. Participate in a family group decisionmaking conference,
76 family team conferencing, or other family meetings aimed at
77 developing or supporting the family service plan;
- 78 2. Attend visitations with the child;
- 79 3. Assist in transportation of the child;
- 80 4. Provide respite or child care services; or
- 81 5. Provide actual kinship care.

82 (b) The department and the community-based care lead
83 agencies must use diligent efforts in family finding, must
84 continue those efforts until multiple relatives and kin are
85 identified, and must go beyond basic searching tools by
86 exploring alternative tools and methodologies. Efforts by the
87 department and the community-based care lead agency may include,
88 but are not limited to:

- 89 1. Searching for and locating adult relatives and kin.
- 90 2. Identifying and building positive connections between
91 the child and the child's relatives and fictive kin.
- 92 3. Supporting the engagement of relatives and fictive kin
93 in social service planning and delivery of services and creating
94 a network of extended family support to assist in remedying the
95 concerns that led to the child becoming involved with the child
96 welfare system, when appropriate.
- 97 4. Maintaining family connections, when possible.



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98 5. Keeping siblings together in care, when in the best
99 interest of each child and when possible.

100 (c) A basic computer search using the Internet or attempts
101 to contact known relatives at a last known address or telephone
102 number do not constitute effective family finding.

103 (d) The court's inquiry and determination regarding family
104 finding should be made at each stage of the case, including a
105 shelter hearing conducted pursuant to s. 39.402. The court shall
106 place its determinations on the record as to whether the
107 department or community-based care lead agency has reasonably
108 engaged in family finding. The level of reasonableness is to be
109 determined by the length of the case and the amount of time the
110 department or community-based care lead agency has had to begin
111 or continue the process.

112 (4) RULEMAKING.—The department shall adopt rules to
113 implement this section.

114 Section 2. Paragraphs (c) and (d) of subsection (11) of
115 section 39.402, Florida Statutes, and subsection (17) of that
116 section are amended to read:

117 39.402 Placement in a shelter.—

118 (11)

119 (c) The court shall request that the parents consent to
120 provide access to the child's child care records, early
121 education program records, or other educational records and
122 provide information to the court, the department or its contract
123 agencies, and any guardian ad litem or attorney for the child.
124 If a parent is unavailable or unable to consent or withholds
125 consent and the court determines access to the records and
126 information is necessary to provide services to the child, the



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127 court shall issue an order granting access.

128 (d) The court may appoint a surrogate parent or may refer
129 the child to the district school superintendent for appointment
130 of a surrogate parent if the child has or is suspected of having
131 a disability and the parent is unavailable pursuant to s.
132 39.0016(3) (b). If the child is under the age of school entry,
133 the court must make the appointment.

134 (17) At the shelter hearing, the court shall inquire of the
135 parent whether the parent has relatives who might be considered
136 as a placement for the child. The parent shall provide to the
137 court and all parties identification and location information
138 regarding the relatives. The court shall advise the parent that
139 the parent has a continuing duty to inform the department of any
140 relative who should be considered for placement of the child.
141 The court shall place its determinations on the record as to
142 whether the department or community-based care lead agency has
143 reasonably engaged in family finding. The level of
144 reasonableness is to be determined by the length of the case and
145 amount of time the department or community-based care lead
146 agency has had to begin or continue the process.

147 Section 3. Present subsection (9) of section 39.506,
148 Florida Statutes, is redesignated as subsection (10), and a new
149 subsection (9) is added to that section, to read:

150 39.506 Arraignment hearings.—

151 (9) The court shall review whether the department or
152 community-based care lead agency has reasonably engaged in
153 family finding and make a written determination as to its
154 findings. The level of reasonableness is determined by the
155 length of the case and amount of time the department or



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156 community-based care lead agency has had to begin or continue
157 the process.

158 Section 4. Paragraphs (c) and (d) of subsection (7) of
159 section 39.507, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

160 39.507 Adjudicatory hearings; orders of adjudication.—

161 (7)

162 (c) If a court adjudicates a child dependent and the child
163 is in out-of-home care, the court shall inquire of the parent or
164 parents whether the parents have relatives who might be
165 considered as a placement for the child. ~~The court shall advise~~
166 ~~the parents that, if the parents fail to substantially comply~~
167 ~~with the case plan, their parental rights may be terminated and~~
168 ~~that the child's out-of-home placement may become permanent.~~ The
169 parent or parents shall provide to the court and all parties
170 identification and location information of the relatives. The
171 court shall review whether the department or community-based
172 care lead agency has reasonably engaged in family finding and
173 make a written determination as to its findings. The level of
174 reasonableness is determined by the length of the case and
175 amount of time the department or community-based care lead
176 agency has had to begin or continue the process.

177 (d) The court shall advise the parents that, if they fail
178 to substantially comply with the case plan, their parental
179 rights may be terminated and that the child's out-of-home
180 placement may become permanent.

181 Section 5. Effective January 1, 2019, section 39.5085,
182 Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

183 39.5085 Kinship Care Relative Caregiver Program.—

184 (1) LEGISLATIVE FINDINGS AND INTENT.—



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185 (a) The Legislature finds that an increasing number of
186 relatives and fictive kin are assuming the responsibility of
187 raising children because the parents of these children are
188 unable to care for them.

189 (b) The Legislature also finds that these kinship
190 caregivers perform a vital function by providing homes for
191 children who would otherwise be at risk of foster care placement
192 and that kinship care is a crucial option in the spectrum of
193 out-of-home care available to children in need.

194 (c) The Legislature finds that children living with kinship
195 caregivers experience increased placement stability, are less
196 likely to reenter care if they are reunified with their parents,
197 and have better behavioral and mental health outcomes.

198 (d) The Legislature further finds that these kinship
199 caregivers may face a number of difficulties and need assistance
200 to support the health and well-being of the children they care
201 for. These needs include, but are not limited to, financial
202 assistance, legal assistance, respite care, child care,
203 specialized training, and counseling.

204 (e) It is the intent of the Legislature to provide for the
205 establishment and implementation of procedures and protocols
206 that are likely to increase and adequately support appropriate
207 and safe kinship care placements.

208 (2) DEFINITIONS.—As used this section, the term:

209 (a) "Fictive kin" means an individual who is unrelated to
210 the child by either birth or marriage, but has such a close
211 emotional relationship with the child that he or she may be
212 considered part of the family.

213 (b) "Kinship care" means the full-time care of a child



214 placed in out-of-home care by the court in the home of a
215 relative or fictive kin.

216 (c) "Kinship navigator program" means a statewide program
217 designed to ensure that kinship caregivers are provided with
218 necessary resources for the preservation of the family.

219 (d) "Relative" means an individual who is caring full time
220 for a child placed in out-of-home care by the court and who:

221 1. Is related to the child within the fifth degree by blood
222 or marriage to the parent or stepparent of the child; or

223 2. Is related to a half-sibling of that child within the
224 fifth degree by blood or marriage to the parent or stepparent.

225 (3) FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE.—The department shall provide
226 financial assistance to all caregivers who qualify under this
227 subsection.

228 (a) Relatives or fictive kin caring for a child who has
229 been placed with them by the court shall receive a monthly
230 caregiver benefit, beginning when the child is placed with them.

231 The amount of the benefit payment is based on the child's age
232 within a payment schedule established by rule of the department.

233 The cost of providing the assistance described in this section
234 to any caregiver may not exceed the cost of providing out-of-
235 home care in emergency shelter or foster care.

236 (b) Caregivers who receive assistance under this section
237 must be capable, as determined by a home study, of providing a
238 physically safe environment and a stable, supportive home for
239 the children under their care and must assure that the
240 children's well-being is met, including, but not limited to, the
241 provision of immunizations, education, and mental health
242 services, as needed.



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243 (c) Caregivers who qualify for and receive assistance under
244 this section are not required to meet foster care licensing
245 requirements under s. 409.175.

246 (d) Children receiving cash benefits under this section are
247 not eligible to simultaneously receive WAGES cash benefits under
248 chapter 414.

249 (d) A caregiver may not receive a benefit payment if the
250 parent or stepparent of the child resides in the home. However,
251 a caregiver may receive the benefit payment for a minor parent
252 who is in his or her care, as well as for the minor parent's
253 child, if both children have been adjudicated dependent and meet
254 all other eligibility requirements. If the caregiver is
255 receiving a benefit payment when a parent, other than an
256 eligible minor parent, or stepparent moves into the home, the
257 payment must be terminated no later than the first day of the
258 month following the move, allowing for 10-day notice of adverse
259 action.

260 (e) Children living with caregivers who are receiving
261 assistance under this section are eligible for Medicaid
262 coverage.

263 (4) ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE AND SERVICES.—

264 (a) The purpose of a kinship navigator program is to help
265 relative caregivers and fictive kin in the child welfare system
266 to navigate the broad range of services available to them and
267 the children from public, private, community, and faith-based
268 organizations.

269 (b) By January 1, 2019, each community-based care lead
270 agency shall establish a kinship navigator program. In order to
271 meet the requirements of a kinship navigator program, the



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272 program must:

273 1. Be coordinated with other state or local agencies that
274 promote service coordination or provide information and referral
275 services, including any entities that participate in the Florida
276 211 Network, to avoid duplication or fragmentation of services
277 to kinship care families;

278 2. Be planned and operated in consultation with kinship
279 caregivers and organizations representing them, youth raised by
280 kinship caregivers, relevant governmental agencies, and relevant
281 community-based or faith-based organizations;

282 3. Establish a toll-free telephone hotline to provide
283 information to link kinship caregivers, kinship support group
284 facilitators, and kinship service providers to:

285 a. One another;

286 b. Eligibility and enrollment information for federal,
287 state, and local benefits;

288 c. Relevant training to assist kinship caregivers in
289 caregiving and in obtaining benefits and services; and

290 d. Relevant knowledge related to legal options available
291 for child custody, other legal assistance, and help in obtaining
292 legal services.

293 4. Provide outreach to kinship care families, including by
294 establishing, distributing, and updating a kinship care website,
295 or other relevant guides or outreach materials; and

296 5. Promote partnerships between public and private
297 agencies, including schools, community-based or faith-based
298 organizations, and relevant governmental agencies, to increase
299 their knowledge of the needs of kinship care families to promote
300 better services for those families.



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301 (5) RULEMAKING.—The department shall adopt rules to
302 implement this section.

303 ~~(1) It is the intent of the Legislature in enacting this~~
304 ~~section to:~~

305 ~~(a) Provide for the establishment of procedures and~~
306 ~~protocols that serve to advance the continued safety of children~~
307 ~~by acknowledging the valued resource uniquely available through~~
308 ~~grandparents, relatives of children, and specified nonrelatives~~
309 ~~of children pursuant to subparagraph (2) (a)3.~~

310 ~~(b) Recognize family relationships in which a grandparent~~
311 ~~or other relative is the head of a household that includes a~~
312 ~~child otherwise at risk of foster care placement.~~

313 ~~(c) Enhance family preservation and stability by~~
314 ~~recognizing that most children in such placements with~~
315 ~~grandparents and other relatives do not need intensive~~
316 ~~supervision of the placement by the courts or by the department.~~

317 ~~(d) Recognize that permanency in the best interests of the~~
318 ~~child can be achieved through a variety of permanency options,~~
319 ~~including permanent guardianship under s. 39.6221 if the~~
320 ~~guardian is a relative, by permanent placement with a fit and~~
321 ~~willing relative under s. 39.6231, by a relative, guardianship~~
322 ~~under chapter 744, or adoption, by providing additional~~
323 ~~placement options and incentives that will achieve permanency~~
324 ~~and stability for many children who are otherwise at risk of~~
325 ~~foster care placement because of abuse, abandonment, or neglect,~~
326 ~~but who may successfully be able to be placed by the dependency~~
327 ~~court in the care of such relatives.~~

328 ~~(e) Reserve the limited casework and supervisory resources~~
329 ~~of the courts and the department for those cases in which~~



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330 ~~children do not have the option for safe, stable care within the~~
331 ~~family.~~

332 ~~(f) Recognize that a child may have a close relationship~~
333 ~~with a person who is not a blood relative or a relative by~~
334 ~~marriage and that such person should be eligible for financial~~
335 ~~assistance under this section if he or she is able and willing~~
336 ~~to care for the child and provide a safe, stable home~~
337 ~~environment.~~

338 ~~(2)(a) The Department of Children and Families shall~~
339 ~~establish, operate, and implement the Relative Caregiver Program~~
340 ~~by rule of the department. The Relative Caregiver Program shall,~~
341 ~~within the limits of available funding, provide financial~~
342 ~~assistance to:~~

343 ~~1. Relatives who are within the fifth degree by blood or~~
344 ~~marriage to the parent or stepparent of a child and who are~~
345 ~~caring full-time for that dependent child in the role of~~
346 ~~substitute parent as a result of a court's determination of~~
347 ~~child abuse, neglect, or abandonment and subsequent placement~~
348 ~~with the relative under this chapter.~~

349 ~~2. Relatives who are within the fifth degree by blood or~~
350 ~~marriage to the parent or stepparent of a child and who are~~
351 ~~caring full-time for that dependent child, and a dependent half-~~
352 ~~brother or half-sister of that dependent child, in the role of~~
353 ~~substitute parent as a result of a court's determination of~~
354 ~~child abuse, neglect, or abandonment and subsequent placement~~
355 ~~with the relative under this chapter.~~

356 ~~3. Nonrelatives who are willing to assume custody and care~~
357 ~~of a dependent child in the role of substitute parent as a~~
358 ~~result of a court's determination of child abuse, neglect, or~~



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359 ~~abandonment and subsequent placement with the nonrelative~~
360 ~~caregiver under this chapter. The court must find that a~~
361 ~~proposed placement under this subparagraph is in the best~~
362 ~~interest of the child.~~

363 ~~4. A relative or nonrelative caregiver, but the relative or~~
364 ~~nonrelative caregiver may not receive a Relative Caregiver~~
365 ~~Program payment if the parent or stepparent of the child resides~~
366 ~~in the home. However, a relative or nonrelative may receive the~~
367 ~~Relative Caregiver Program payment for a minor parent who is in~~
368 ~~his or her care, as well as for the minor parent's child, if~~
369 ~~both children have been adjudicated dependent and meet all other~~
370 ~~eligibility requirements. If the caregiver is currently~~
371 ~~receiving the payment, the Relative Caregiver Program payment~~
372 ~~must be terminated no later than the first of the following~~
373 ~~month after the parent or stepparent moves into the home,~~
374 ~~allowing for 10-day notice of adverse action.~~

375
376 ~~The placement may be court-ordered temporary legal custody~~
377 ~~to the relative or nonrelative under protective supervision of~~
378 ~~the department pursuant to s. 39.521(1)(c)3., or court-ordered~~
379 ~~placement in the home of a relative or nonrelative as a~~
380 ~~permanency option under s. 39.6221 or s. 39.6231 or under former~~
381 ~~s. 39.622 if the placement was made before July 1, 2006. The~~
382 ~~Relative Caregiver Program shall offer financial assistance to~~
383 ~~caregivers who would be unable to serve in that capacity without~~
384 ~~the caregiver payment because of financial burden, thus exposing~~
385 ~~the child to the trauma of placement in a shelter or in foster~~
386 ~~care.~~

387 ~~(b) Caregivers who receive assistance under this section~~



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388 ~~must be capable, as determined by a home study, of providing a~~
389 ~~physically safe environment and a stable, supportive home for~~
390 ~~the children under their care and must assure that the~~
391 ~~children's well-being is met, including, but not limited to, the~~
392 ~~provision of immunizations, education, and mental health~~
393 ~~services as needed.~~

394 ~~(c) Relatives or nonrelatives who qualify for and~~
395 ~~participate in the Relative Caregiver Program are not required~~
396 ~~to meet foster care licensing requirements under s. 409.175.~~

397 ~~(d) Relatives or nonrelatives who are caring for children~~
398 ~~placed with them by the court pursuant to this chapter shall~~
399 ~~receive a special monthly caregiver benefit established by rule~~
400 ~~of the department. The amount of the special benefit payment~~
401 ~~shall be based on the child's age within a payment schedule~~
402 ~~established by rule of the department and subject to~~
403 ~~availability of funding. The statewide average monthly rate for~~
404 ~~children judicially placed with relatives or nonrelatives who~~
405 ~~are not licensed as foster homes may not exceed 82 percent of~~
406 ~~the statewide average foster care rate, and the cost of~~
407 ~~providing the assistance described in this section to any~~
408 ~~caregiver may not exceed the cost of providing out-of-home care~~
409 ~~in emergency shelter or foster care.~~

410 ~~(e) Children receiving cash benefits under this section are~~
411 ~~not eligible to simultaneously receive WAGES cash benefits under~~
412 ~~chapter 414.~~

413 ~~(f) Within available funding, the Relative Caregiver~~
414 ~~Program shall provide caregivers with family support and~~
415 ~~preservation services, flexible funds in accordance with s.~~
416 ~~409.165, school readiness, and other available services in order~~



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417 ~~to support the child's safety, growth, and healthy development.~~
418 ~~Children living with caregivers who are receiving assistance~~
419 ~~under this section shall be eligible for Medicaid coverage.~~

420 ~~(g) The department may use appropriate available state,~~
421 ~~federal, and private funds to operate the Relative Caregiver~~
422 ~~Program. The department may develop liaison functions to be~~
423 ~~available to relatives or nonrelatives who care for children~~
424 ~~pursuant to this chapter to ensure placement stability in~~
425 ~~extended family settings.~~

426 Section 6. Paragraph (e) of subsection (1) of section
427 39.521, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

428 39.521 Disposition hearings; powers of disposition.—

429 (1) A disposition hearing shall be conducted by the court,
430 if the court finds that the facts alleged in the petition for
431 dependency were proven in the adjudicatory hearing, or if the
432 parents or legal custodians have consented to the finding of
433 dependency or admitted the allegations in the petition, have
434 failed to appear for the arraignment hearing after proper
435 notice, or have not been located despite a diligent search
436 having been conducted.

437 (e) The court shall, in its written order of disposition,
438 include all of the following:

- 439 1. The placement or custody of the child.
- 440 2. Special conditions of placement and visitation.
- 441 3. Evaluation, counseling, treatment activities, and other
442 actions to be taken by the parties, if ordered.
- 443 4. The persons or entities responsible for supervising or
444 monitoring services to the child and parent.
- 445 5. Continuation or discharge of the guardian ad litem, as



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446 appropriate.

447 6. The date, time, and location of the next scheduled
448 review hearing, which must occur within the earlier of:

449 a. Ninety days after the disposition hearing;

450 b. Ninety days after the court accepts the case plan;

451 c. Six months after the date of the last review hearing; or

452 d. Six months after the date of the child's removal from
453 his or her home, if no review hearing has been held since the
454 child's removal from the home.

455 7. If the child is in an out-of-home placement, child
456 support to be paid by the parents, or the guardian of the
457 child's estate if possessed of assets which under law may be
458 disbursed for the care, support, and maintenance of the child.
459 The court may exercise jurisdiction over all child support
460 matters, shall adjudicate the financial obligation, including
461 health insurance, of the child's parents or guardian, and shall
462 enforce the financial obligation as provided in chapter 61. The
463 state's child support enforcement agency shall enforce child
464 support orders under this section in the same manner as child
465 support orders under chapter 61. Placement of the child shall
466 not be contingent upon issuance of a support order.

467 8.a. If the court does not commit the child to the
468 temporary legal custody of an adult relative, legal custodian,
469 or other adult approved by the court, the disposition order must
470 ~~shall~~ include the reasons for such a decision and ~~shall include~~
471 a written determination as to whether ~~diligent efforts were made~~
472 by the department and the community-based care lead agency
473 reasonably engaged in family finding in attempting to locate an
474 adult relative, legal custodian, or other adult willing to care



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475 for the child in order to present that placement option to the
476 court instead of placement with the department. The level of
477 reasonableness is determined by the length of the case and
478 amount of time the department or community-based care lead
479 agency has had to begin or continue the process.

480 b. If no suitable relative is found and the child is placed
481 with the department or a legal custodian or other adult approved
482 by the court, both the department and the court shall consider
483 transferring temporary legal custody to an adult relative
484 approved by the court at a later date, but neither the
485 department nor the court is obligated to so place the child if
486 it is in the child's best interest to remain in the current
487 placement.

488
489 ~~For the purposes of this section, "diligent efforts to~~
490 ~~locate an adult relative" means a search similar to the diligent~~
491 ~~search for a parent, but without the continuing obligation to~~
492 ~~search after an initial adequate search is completed.~~

493 9. Other requirements necessary to protect the health,
494 safety, and well-being of the child, to preserve the stability
495 of the child's child care, early education program, or any other
496 educational placement, and to promote family preservation or
497 reunification whenever possible.

498 Section 7. Paragraph (b) of subsection (2) and paragraph
499 (a) of subsection (3) of section 39.6012, Florida Statutes, are
500 amended to read:

501 39.6012 Case plan tasks; services.—

502 (2) The case plan must include all available information
503 that is relevant to the child's care including, at a minimum:



504 (b) A description of the plan for ensuring that the child
505 receives safe and proper care and that services are provided to
506 the child in order to address the child's needs. To the extent
507 available and accessible, the following health, mental health,
508 and education information and records of the child must be
509 attached to the case plan and updated throughout the judicial
510 review process:

511 1. The names and addresses of the child's health, mental
512 health, and educational providers;

513 2. The child's grade level performance;

514 3. The child's school record or, if the child is under the
515 age of school entry, any records from a child care program,
516 early education program, or preschool program;

517 4. Documentation of compliance or noncompliance with the
518 attendance requirements under s. 39.604, if the child is
519 enrolled in a child care program, early education program, or
520 preschool program;

521 ~~5.4.~~ Assurances that the child's placement takes into
522 account proximity to the school in which the child is enrolled
523 at the time of placement;

524 ~~6. 5.~~ A record of The child's immunizations;

525 ~~7.6.~~ The child's known medical history, including any known
526 health problems;

527 ~~8.7.~~ The child's medications, if any; and

528 ~~9.8.~~ Any other relevant health, mental health, and
529 education information concerning the child.

530 (3) In addition to any other requirement, if the child is
531 in an out-of-home placement, the case plan must include:

532 (a) A description of the type of placement in which the



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533 child is to be living and, if the child has been placed with the
534 department, whether the department and the community-based care
535 lead agency have reasonably engaged in family finding to locate
536 an adult relative, legal custodian, or other adult willing to
537 care for the child in order to present that placement option to
538 the court instead of placement with the department.

539 Section 8. Section 39.604, Florida Statutes, is amended to
540 read:

541 39.604 Rilya Wilson Act; short title; legislative intent;
542 requirements; attendance; stability and transitions ~~reporting~~
543 ~~responsibilities.~~-

544 (1) SHORT TITLE.-This section may be cited as the "Rilya
545 Wilson Act."

546 (2) LEGISLATIVE FINDINGS AND INTENT.-

547 (a) The Legislature finds that children from birth to age 5
548 years are particularly vulnerable to maltreatment and that they
549 enter out-of-home care in disproportionately high numbers.

550 (b) The Legislature also finds that children who are abused
551 or neglected are at high risk of experiencing physical and
552 mental health problems and problems with language and
553 communication, cognitive development, and social and emotional
554 development.

555 (c) The Legislature also finds that providing early
556 intervention and services, as well as quality child care and
557 early education programs to support the healthy development of
558 these young children, can have positive effects that last
559 throughout childhood and into adulthood.

560 (d) The Legislature also finds that the needs of each of
561 these children are unique, and while some children may be best



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562 served by a quality child care or early education program,
563 others may need more attention and nurturing that can best be
564 provided by a stay-at-home caregiver ~~The Legislature recognizes~~
565 ~~that children who are in the care of the state due to abuse,~~
566 ~~neglect, or abandonment are at increased risk of poor school~~
567 ~~performance and other behavioral and social problems.~~

568 (e) It is the intent of the Legislature that children who
569 are currently in out-of-home the care of the state be provided
570 with an age-appropriate developmental child care or early
571 education arrangement that is in the best interest of the child
572 ~~education program~~ to help ameliorate the negative consequences
573 of abuse, neglect, or abandonment.

574 (3) REQUIREMENTS.—

575 1. A child from birth to the age of school entry, who is
576 under court-ordered protective supervision or in out-of-home
577 care and is the custody of the Family Safety Program Office of
578 ~~the Department of Children and Families or a community-based~~
579 ~~lead agency, and enrolled in an a licensed~~ early education or
580 child care program must attend the program 5 days a week unless
581 the court grants an exception due to the court determining it is
582 in the best interest of a child from birth to age 3 years:

583 a. With a stay-at-home caregiver to remain at home.

584 b. With a caregiver who works less than full time to attend
585 an early education or child care program fewer than 5 days a
586 week.

587 2. Notwithstanding s. 39.202, the department of Children
588 ~~and Families~~ must notify operators of an the licensed early
589 education or child care program, subject to the reporting
590 requirements of this act, of the enrollment of any child from



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591 birth to the age of school entry, under court-ordered protective
592 supervision or in out-of-home care. ~~If the custody of the Family~~
593 ~~Safety Program Office of the Department of Children and Families~~
594 ~~or a community-based lead agency.~~ When a child is enrolled in an
595 early education or child care program ~~regulated by the~~
596 ~~department~~, the child's attendance in the program must be a
597 required task action in the safety plan or the case plan
598 developed for the child pursuant to this chapter. ~~An exemption~~
599 ~~to participating in the licensed early education or child care~~
600 ~~program 5 days a week may be granted by the court.~~

601 (4) ATTENDANCE AND ~~REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.~~-

602 1.(a) A child enrolled in an a-licensed early education or
603 child care program who meets the requirements of paragraph (b)
604 ~~subsection (3)~~ may not be withdrawn from the program without the
605 prior written approval of the department ~~Family Safety Program~~
606 ~~Office of the Department of Children and Families~~ or the
607 community-based care lead agency.

608 2.a.(b)1. If a child covered by this section is absent from
609 the program on a day when he or she is supposed to be present,
610 the person with whom the child resides must report the absence
611 to the program by the end of the business day. If the person
612 with whom the child resides, whether the parent or caregiver,
613 fails to timely report the absence, the absence is considered to
614 be unexcused. The program shall report any unexcused absence or
615 seven consecutive excused absences of a child who is enrolled in
616 the program and covered by this act to the ~~local designated~~
617 ~~staff of the Family Safety Program Office of the department of~~
618 ~~Children and Families~~ or the community-based care lead agency by
619 the end of the business day following the unexcused absence or



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620 seventh consecutive excused absence.

621 ~~b.2.~~ The department or community-based care lead agency
622 shall conduct a site visit to the residence of the child upon
623 receiving a report of two consecutive unexcused absences or
624 seven consecutive excused absences.

625 ~~c.3.~~ If the site visit results in a determination that the
626 child is missing, the department or community-based care lead
627 agency shall follow the procedure set forth in s. 39.0141 ~~report~~
628 ~~the child as missing to a law enforcement agency and proceed~~
629 ~~with the necessary actions to locate the child pursuant to~~
630 ~~procedures for locating missing children.~~

631 ~~d.4.~~ If the site visit results in a determination that the
632 child is not missing, the parent or caregiver shall be notified
633 that failure to ensure that the child attends the ~~licensed~~ early
634 education or child care program is a violation of the safety
635 plan or the case plan. If more than two site visits are
636 conducted pursuant to this subsection, staff shall ~~initiate~~
637 ~~action to~~ notify the court of the parent or caregiver's
638 noncompliance with the case plan.

639 (5) EDUCATIONAL STABILITY.—Just as educational stability is
640 important for school-age children, it is also important to
641 minimize disruptions to secure attachments and stable
642 relationships with supportive caregivers of children from birth
643 to school age and to ensure that these attachments are not
644 disrupted due to placement in out-of-home care or subsequent
645 changes in out-of-home placement.

646 (a) A child must be allowed to remain in the child care or
647 early educational setting that he or she attended before entry
648 into out-of-home care, unless the program is not in the best



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649 interest of the child.

650 (b) If it is not in the best interest of the child for him
651 or her to remain in his or her child care or early education
652 setting upon entry into out-of-home care, the caregiver must
653 work with the case manager, guardian ad litem, child care and
654 educational staff, and educational surrogate, if one has been
655 appointed, to determine the best setting for the child. Such
656 setting may be a child care provider that receives a Gold Seal
657 Quality Care designation pursuant to s. 402.281, a provider
658 participating in a quality rating system, a licensed child care
659 provider, a public school provider, or a license-exempt child
660 care provider, including religious-exempt and registered
661 providers, and non-public schools.

662 (c) The department and providers of early care and
663 education shall develop protocols to ensure continuity if
664 children are required to leave a program because of a change in
665 out-of-home placement.

666 (6) TRANSITIONS.—In the absence of an emergency, if a child
667 from birth to school age leaves a child care or early education
668 program, the transition must be pursuant to a plan that involves
669 cooperation and sharing of information among all persons
670 involved, that respects the child's developmental stage and
671 associated psychological needs, and that allows for a gradual
672 transition from one setting to another.

673 Section 9. Paragraph (b) of subsection (6) and subsection
674 (7) of section 39.6251, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

675 39.6251 Continuing care for young adults.—

676 (6) A young adult who is between the ages of 18 and 21 and
677 who has left care may return to care by applying to the



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678 community-based care lead agency for readmission. The community-
679 based care lead agency shall readmit the young adult if he or
680 she continues to meet the eligibility requirements in this
681 section.

682 (b) Within 30 days after the young adult has been
683 readmitted to care, the community-based care lead agency shall
684 assign a case manager to update the case plan and the transition
685 plan and to arrange for the required services. Updates to the
686 case plan and the transition plan and arrangements for the
687 required services ~~Such activities~~ shall be undertaken in
688 consultation with the young adult. The department shall petition
689 the court to reinstate jurisdiction over the young adult.
690 Notwithstanding s. 39.013(2), the court shall resume
691 jurisdiction over the young adult if the department establishes
692 that he or she continues to meet the eligibility requirements in
693 this section.

694 (7) During each period of time that a young adult is in
695 care, the community-based lead agency shall provide regular case
696 management reviews that must include at least monthly contact
697 with the case manager. ~~If a young adult lives outside the~~
698 ~~service area of his or her community-based care lead agency,~~
699 ~~monthly contact may occur by telephone.~~

700 Section 10. Paragraph (c) of subsection (2) of section
701 39.701, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

702 39.701 Judicial review.—

703 (2) REVIEW HEARINGS FOR CHILDREN YOUNGER THAN 18 YEARS OF
704 AGE.—

705 (c) *Review determinations.*—The court and any citizen review
706 panel shall take into consideration the information contained in



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707 the social services study and investigation and all medical,
708 psychological, and educational records that support the terms of
709 the case plan; testimony by the social services agency, the
710 parent, the foster parent or legal custodian, the guardian ad
711 litem or surrogate parent for educational decisionmaking if one
712 has been appointed for the child, and any other person deemed
713 appropriate; and any relevant and material evidence submitted to
714 the court, including written and oral reports to the extent of
715 their probative value. These reports and evidence may be
716 received by the court in its effort to determine the action to
717 be taken with regard to the child and may be relied upon to the
718 extent of their probative value, even though not competent in an
719 adjudicatory hearing. In its deliberations, the court and any
720 citizen review panel shall seek to determine:

721 1. If the parent was advised of the right to receive
722 assistance from any person or social service agency in the
723 preparation of the case plan.

724 2. If the parent has been advised of the right to have
725 counsel present at the judicial review or citizen review
726 hearings. If not so advised, the court or citizen review panel
727 shall advise the parent of such right.

728 3. If a guardian ad litem needs to be appointed for the
729 child in a case in which a guardian ad litem has not previously
730 been appointed or if there is a need to continue a guardian ad
731 litem in a case in which a guardian ad litem has been appointed.

732 4. Who holds the rights to make educational decisions for
733 the child. If appropriate, the court may refer the child to the
734 district school superintendent for appointment of a surrogate
735 parent or may itself appoint a surrogate parent under the



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736 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and s. 39.0016. If
737 the child is under the age of school entry, the court must make
738 the appointment.

739 5. The compliance or lack of compliance of all parties with
740 applicable items of the case plan, including the parents'
741 compliance with child support orders.

742 6. The compliance or lack of compliance with a visitation
743 contract between the parent and the social service agency for
744 contact with the child, including the frequency, duration, and
745 results of the parent-child visitation and the reason for any
746 noncompliance.

747 7. The frequency, kind, and duration of contacts among
748 siblings who have been separated during placement, as well as
749 any efforts undertaken to reunite separated siblings if doing so
750 is in the best interest of the child.

751 8. The compliance or lack of compliance of the parent in
752 meeting specified financial obligations pertaining to the care
753 of the child, including the reason for failure to comply, if
754 applicable.

755 9. Whether the child is receiving safe and proper care
756 according to s. 39.6012, including, but not limited to, the
757 appropriateness of the child's current placement, including
758 whether the child is in a setting that is as family-like and as
759 close to the parent's home as possible, consistent with the
760 child's best interests and special needs, and including
761 maintaining stability in the child's educational placement, as
762 documented by assurances from the community-based care provider
763 that:

764 a. The placement of the child takes into account the



765 appropriateness of the current educational setting and the
766 proximity to the school in which the child is enrolled at the
767 time of placement.

768 b. The community-based care agency has coordinated with
769 appropriate local educational agencies to ensure that the child
770 remains in the school in which the child is enrolled at the time
771 of placement.

772 10. Whether the department or community-based care lead
773 agency continues to reasonably engage in family finding. The
774 level of reasonableness is determined by the length of the case
775 and amount of time the department or community-based care lead
776 agency has had to continue the process.

777 11. ~~10.~~ A projected date likely for the child's return home
778 or other permanent placement.

779 12. ~~11.~~ When appropriate, the basis for the unwillingness
780 or inability of the parent to become a party to a case plan. The
781 court and the citizen review panel shall determine if the
782 efforts of the social service agency to secure party
783 participation in a case plan were sufficient.

784 13. ~~12.~~ For a child who has reached 13 years of age but is
785 not yet 18 years of age, the adequacy of the child's preparation
786 for adulthood and independent living. For a child who is 15
787 years of age or older, the court shall determine if appropriate
788 steps are being taken for the child to obtain a driver license
789 or learner's driver license.

790 14. ~~13.~~ If amendments to the case plan are required.
791 Amendments to the case plan must be made as provided in ~~under~~ s.
792 39.6013.

793 Section 11. Subsections (4) and (5) of section 409.166,



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794 Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

795 409.166 Children within the child welfare system; adoption
796 assistance program.—

797 (4) ADOPTION ASSISTANCE.—

798 (a) For purposes of administering payments under paragraph
799 (d), the term:

800 1. "Child" means an individual who has not attained 21
801 years of age.

802 2. "Young adult" means an individual who has attained 18
803 years of age but who has not attained 21 years of age.

804 (b)~~(a)~~ A maintenance subsidy shall be granted only when all
805 other resources available to a child have been thoroughly
806 explored and it can be clearly established that this is the most
807 acceptable plan for providing permanent placement for the child.
808 The maintenance subsidy may not be used as a substitute for
809 adoptive parent recruitment or as an inducement to adopt a child
810 who might be placed without providing a subsidy. However, it
811 shall be the policy of the department that no child be denied
812 adoption if providing a maintenance subsidy would make adoption
813 possible. The best interest of the child shall be the deciding
814 factor in every case. This section does not prohibit foster
815 parents from applying to adopt a child placed in their care.
816 Foster parents or relative caregivers must be asked if they
817 would adopt without a maintenance subsidy.

818 (c)~~(b)~~ The department shall provide adoption assistance to
819 the adoptive parents, subject to specific appropriation, in the
820 amount of \$5,000 annually, paid on a monthly basis, for the
821 support and maintenance of a child until the 18th birthday of
822 such child or in an amount other than \$5,000 annually as



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823 determined by the adoptive parents and the department and
824 memorialized in a written agreement between the adoptive parents
825 and the department. The agreement shall take into consideration
826 the circumstances of the adoptive parents and the needs of the
827 child being adopted. The amount of subsidy may be adjusted based
828 upon changes in the needs of the child or circumstances of the
829 adoptive parents. Changes may ~~shall~~ not be made without the
830 concurrence of the adoptive parents. However, in no case shall
831 the amount of the monthly payment exceed the foster care
832 maintenance payment that would have been paid during the same
833 period if the child had been in a foster family home.

834 (d) Effective January 1, 2019, adoption assistance payments
835 may be made for a child whose adoptive parent entered into an
836 adoption assistance agreement after the child reached 16 years
837 of age but before the child reached 18 years of age if the child
838 is:

839 1. Completing secondary education or a program leading to
840 an equivalent credential;

841 2. Enrolled in an institution that provides postsecondary
842 or vocational education;

843 3. Participating in a program or activity designed to
844 promote or eliminate barriers to employment;

845 4. Employed for at least 80 hours per month; or

846 5. Unable to participate in programs or activities listed
847 in subparagraphs 1.-4. full time due to a physical,
848 intellectual, emotional, or psychiatric condition that limits
849 participation. Any such barrier to participation must be
850 supported by documentation in the child's case file or school or
851 medical records.



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852 (e) A child or young adult receiving benefits through the
853 adoption assistance program is not eligible to simultaneously
854 receive relative caregiver benefits under s. 39.5085 or
855 postsecondary education services and support under s. 409.1451.

856 (f)~~(e)~~ The department may provide adoption assistance to
857 the adoptive parents, subject to specific appropriation, for
858 medical assistance initiated after the adoption of the child for
859 medical, surgical, hospital, and related services needed as a
860 result of a physical or mental condition of the child which
861 existed before the adoption and is not covered by Medicaid,
862 Children's Medical Services, or Children's Mental Health
863 Services. Such assistance may be initiated at any time but shall
864 terminate on or before the child's 18th birthday.

865 (5) ELIGIBILITY FOR SERVICES.—

866 (a) As a condition of providing adoption assistance under
867 this section and before the adoption is finalized, the adoptive
868 parents must have an approved adoption home study and must enter
869 into an adoption-assistance agreement with the department which
870 specifies the financial assistance and other services to be
871 provided.

872 (b) A child who is handicapped at the time of adoption is
873 ~~shall be~~ eligible for services through the Children's Medical
874 Services network established under part I of chapter 391 if the
875 child was eligible for such services before ~~prior to~~ the
876 adoption.

877 Section 12. Effective January 1, 2019, paragraph (b) of
878 subsection (1) of section 414.045, Florida Statutes, is amended
879 to read:

880 414.045 Cash assistance program.—Cash assistance families



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881 include any families receiving cash assistance payments from the
882 state program for temporary assistance for needy families as
883 defined in federal law, whether such funds are from federal
884 funds, state funds, or commingled federal and state funds. Cash
885 assistance families may also include families receiving cash
886 assistance through a program defined as a separate state
887 program.

888 (1) For reporting purposes, families receiving cash
889 assistance shall be grouped into the following categories. The
890 department may develop additional groupings in order to comply
891 with federal reporting requirements, to comply with the data-
892 reporting needs of the board of directors of CareerSource
893 Florida, Inc., or to better inform the public of program
894 progress.

895 (b) *Child-only cases.*—Child-only cases include cases that
896 do not have an adult or teen head of household as defined in
897 federal law. Such cases include:

898 1. Children in the care of caretaker relatives, if the
899 caretaker relatives choose to have their needs excluded in the
900 calculation of the amount of cash assistance.

901 2. Families in the Kinship Care ~~Relative Caregiver~~ Program
902 as provided in s. 39.5085.

903 3. Families in which the only parent in a single-parent
904 family or both parents in a two-parent family receive
905 supplemental security income (SSI) benefits under Title XVI of
906 the Social Security Act, as amended. To the extent permitted by
907 federal law, individuals receiving SSI shall be excluded as
908 household members in determining the amount of cash assistance,
909 and such cases shall not be considered families containing an



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910 adult. Parents or caretaker relatives who are excluded from the
911 cash assistance group due to receipt of SSI may choose to
912 participate in work activities. An individual whose ability to
913 participate in work activities is limited who volunteers to
914 participate in work activities shall be assigned to work
915 activities consistent with such limitations. An individual who
916 volunteers to participate in a work activity may receive child
917 care or support services consistent with such participation.

918 4. Families in which the only parent in a single-parent
919 family or both parents in a two-parent family are not eligible
920 for cash assistance due to immigration status or other
921 limitation of federal law. To the extent required by federal
922 law, such cases shall not be considered families containing an
923 adult.

924 5. To the extent permitted by federal law and subject to
925 appropriations, special needs children who have been adopted
926 pursuant to s. 409.166 and whose adopting family qualifies as a
927 needy family under the state program for temporary assistance
928 for needy families. Notwithstanding any provision to the
929 contrary in s. 414.075, s. 414.085, or s. 414.095, a family
930 shall be considered a needy family if:

931 a. The family is determined by the department to have an
932 income below 200 percent of the federal poverty level;

933 b. The family meets the requirements of s. 414.095(2) and
934 (3) related to residence, citizenship, or eligible noncitizen
935 status; and

936 c. The family provides any information that may be
937 necessary to meet federal reporting requirements specified under
938 Part A of Title IV of the Social Security Act.



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Families described in subparagraph 1., subparagraph 2., or subparagraph 3. may receive child care assistance or other supports or services so that the children may continue to be cared for in their own homes or in the homes of relatives. Such assistance or services may be funded from the temporary assistance for needy families block grant to the extent permitted under federal law and to the extent funds have been provided in the General Appropriations Act.

Section 13. Paragraph (d) of subsection (1) of section 1009.25, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

1009.25 Fee exemptions.—

(1) The following students are exempt from the payment of tuition and fees, including lab fees, at a school district that provides workforce education programs, Florida College System institution, or state university:

(d) A student who is or was at the time he or she reached 18 years of age in the custody of a kinship caregiver ~~relative or nonrelative~~ under s. 39.5085 or who was adopted from the Department of Children and Families after May 5, 1997. Such exemption includes fees associated with enrollment in applied academics for adult education instruction. The exemption remains valid until the student reaches 28 years of age.

Section 14. The Department of Children and Families shall establish and operate a pilot Title IV-E Guardianship Assistance Program in two circuits in Florida effective August 1, 2018. The program will provide payments at a rate of \$333 per month for persons who meet the Title IV-E eligibility requirements as outlined in s. 473(d)(1)(A) of the Social Security Act.



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968 (a) For purposes of administering this program, the term:
969 1. "Child" means an individual who has not attained 21
970 years of age.
971 2. "Young adult" means an individual who has attained 18
972 years of age but who has not attained 21 years of age.
973 3. "Fictive kin" means a person unrelated by birth,
974 marriage, or adoption who has an emotionally significant
975 relationship, which possesses the characteristics of a family
976 relationship, to a child.
977 (b) Caregivers enrolled in the Relative Caregiver or
978 Nonrelative Caregiver Program prior to August 1, 2018, are not
979 eligible to participate in the Title IV-E Guardianship
980 Assistance Program pilot. Effective August 1, 2018, eligible
981 caregivers enrolled in the pilot may not simultaneously have
982 payments made on the child's behalf through the Relative
983 Caregiver Program under s. 39.5085, postsecondary education
984 services and supports under s. 409.1451, or child-only cash
985 assistance under chapter 414.
986 (c) Notwithstanding s. 39.5085, in the two circuits where
987 the Title IV-E Guardianship Assistance Program pilot is
988 established, the Relative Caregiver Program will discontinue
989 accepting applications effective July 31, 2018.
990 (d) Notwithstanding s. 409.145(4), in the two circuits
991 where the Title IV-E Guardianship Assistance Program pilot is
992 established, the room and board rate for guardians who are
993 eligible for the program will be \$333 per month.
994 (e) Notwithstanding s. 409.175(11)(a), in the two circuits
995 where the Title IV-E Guardianship Assistance Program pilot is
996 established, an exception of licensing standards may be provided



997 for those standards where a waiver has been granted.

998 Section 15. Except as otherwise expressly provided in this
999 act, this act shall take effect July 1, 2018.

1000

1001 ===== T I T L E A M E N D M E N T =====

1002 And the title is amended as follows:

1003 Delete everything before the enacting clause
1004 and insert:

1005 A bill to be entitled to
1006 An act relating to child welfare; creating s. 39.4015,
1007 F.S.; providing legislative findings and intent;
1008 defining terms; requiring the Department of Children
1009 and Families, in collaboration with sheriffs' offices
1010 that conduct child protective investigations and
1011 community-based care lead agencies, to develop a
1012 statewide family-finding program; requiring the
1013 implementation of family finding by a specified date;
1014 requiring the department and community-based care lead
1015 agencies to document strategies taken to engage
1016 relatives and kin; providing strategies to engage
1017 relatives and kin; requiring the department and
1018 community-based care lead agencies to use diligent
1019 efforts in family finding; providing that certain
1020 actions do not constitute family finding; requiring
1021 determinations by the court; requiring the department
1022 to adopt rules; amending s. 39.402, F.S.; requiring
1023 the court to request that parents consent to providing
1024 access to additional records; requiring a judge to
1025 appoint a surrogate parent for certain children;



1026 requiring the court to place on the record its
1027 determinations regarding the department's or the
1028 community-based lead agency's reasonable engagement in
1029 family finding; providing guidelines for determining
1030 reasonableness; amending ss. 39.506; requiring the
1031 court to make a determination regarding the
1032 department's or the community-based lead agency's
1033 reasonable engagement in family finding; providing
1034 guidelines for determining reasonableness; amending s.
1035 39.507 F.S.; requiring the court to make a
1036 determination regarding the department's or the
1037 community-based lead agency's reasonable engagement in
1038 family finding; providing guidelines for determining
1039 reasonableness; requiring the court to advise parents
1040 that their parental rights may be terminated and the
1041 child's out-of-home placement may become permanent
1042 under certain circumstances; amending s. 39.5085,
1043 F.S.; providing legislative findings and intent;
1044 defining terms; requiring the department to provide
1045 financial assistance to kinship caregivers who meet
1046 certain requirements; providing eligibility criteria
1047 for such financial assistance; providing that children
1048 living with caregivers who are receiving financial
1049 assistance are eligible for Medicaid coverage;
1050 providing the purpose of a kinship navigator program;
1051 requiring each community-based care lead agency to
1052 establish a kinship navigator program by a certain
1053 date; providing requirements for programs; requiring
1054 the department to adopt rules; deleting provisions



1055 related to the Relative Caregiver Program; amending s.
1056 39.521, F.S.; requiring the court to make a
1057 determination regarding the department's or the
1058 community-based lead agency's reasonable engagement in
1059 family finding ; providing guidelines for determining
1060 reasonableness; conforming provisions to changes made
1061 by the act; amending s. 39.6012, F.S.; revising the
1062 types of records that must be attached to a case plan
1063 and updated throughout the judicial review process;
1064 requiring that documentation of the family-finding
1065 efforts of the department and the community-based care
1066 lead agency be included in certain case plans;
1067 amending s. 39.604, F.S.; revising legislative
1068 findings and intent; revising enrollment and
1069 attendance requirements for children in an early
1070 education or child care program; conforming cross-
1071 references; providing requirements and procedures for
1072 maintaining the educational stability of a child
1073 during the child's placement in out-of-home care, or
1074 subsequent changes in out-of-home placement; requiring
1075 that a child's transition from a child care or early
1076 education program be pursuant to a plan that meets
1077 certain requirements; amending s. 39.6251, F.S.;
1078 requiring the case manager for a young adult in foster
1079 care to consult with the young adult when updating the
1080 case plan and the transition plan and arrangements;
1081 deleting a provision authorizing case management
1082 reviews to be conducted by telephone under certain
1083 circumstances; amending s. 39.701, F.S.; requiring the



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1084 court to appoint a surrogate parent if the child is
1085 under the age of school entry; requiring the court to
1086 determine if the department and community-based lead
1087 agency has continued to reasonably engaged in family
1088 finding; providing guidelines for determining the
1089 level of reasonableness; amending s. 409.166, F.S.;
1090 defining terms; providing conditions for the
1091 department to provide adoption assistance payments to
1092 adoptive parents of certain children; providing that
1093 children and young adults receiving benefits through
1094 the adoption assistance program are ineligible for
1095 other specified benefits and services; providing
1096 additional conditions for eligibility for adoption
1097 assistance; amending ss. 414.045 and 1009.25, F.S.;
1098 conforming provisions to changes made by the act;
1099 requiring the Department of Children and Families to
1100 create a pilot Title IV-E Guardianship Assistance
1101 Program; providing definitions; specifying eligibility
1102 and limitations;
1103