

1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to child-placing agencies; amending s.
3 409.175, F.S.; requiring the Department of Children
4 and Families to adopt or amend licensing rules for
5 child-placing agencies to include specific
6 requirements to prevent the separation of siblings;
7 providing an effective date.
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9 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:
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11 Section 1. Paragraphs (a), (b), and (d) of subsection (5)
12 of section 409.175, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

13 409.175 Licensure of family foster homes, residential
14 child-caring agencies, and child-placing agencies; public
15 records exemption.—

16 (5) (a) The department shall adopt and amend licensing
17 rules for family foster homes, residential child-caring
18 agencies, and child-placing agencies. The department may also
19 adopt rules relating to the screening requirements for summer
20 day camps and summer 24-hour camps. The requirements for
21 licensure and operation of family foster homes, residential
22 child-caring agencies, and child-placing agencies shall include:

23 1. The operation, conduct, and maintenance of these homes
24 and agencies and the responsibility which they assume for
25 children served and the evidence of need for that service.

26 2. The provision of food, clothing, educational
27 opportunities, services, equipment, and individual supplies to
28 assure the healthy physical, emotional, and mental development
29 of the children served.

30 3. The appropriateness, safety, cleanliness, and general
31 adequacy of the premises, including fire prevention and health
32 standards, to provide for the physical comfort, care, and well-
33 being of the children served.

34 4. The ratio of staff to children required to provide
35 adequate care and supervision of the children served and, in the
36 case of foster homes, the maximum number of children in the
37 home.

38 5. The good moral character based upon screening,
39 education, training, and experience requirements for personnel.

40 ~~6.~~ The department may grant exemptions from
41 disqualification from working with children or the
42 developmentally disabled as provided in s. 435.07.

43 6.7. The provision of preservice and inservice training
44 for all foster parents and agency staff.

45 ~~7.8.~~ Satisfactory evidence of financial ability to provide
46 care for the children in compliance with licensing requirements.

47 ~~8.9.~~ The maintenance by the agency of records pertaining
48 to admission, progress, health, and discharge of children
49 served, including written case plans and reports to the
50 department.

51 ~~9.10.~~ The provision for parental involvement to encourage
 52 preservation and strengthening of a child's relationship with
 53 the family.

54 ~~10.11.~~ The transportation safety of children served.

55 ~~11.12.~~ The provisions for safeguarding the cultural,
 56 religious, and ethnic values of a child.

57 ~~12.13.~~ Provisions to safeguard the legal rights of
 58 children served.

59 (b) The requirements for the licensure and operation of a
 60 child-placing agency shall also include:

61 1. Compliance with the requirements of ss. 63.0422 and
 62 790.335; and

63 2. The following provisions to prevent the separation of
 64 siblings:

65 a. Siblings must be placed in the same home whenever
 66 possible. If it is not possible to place the siblings in the
 67 same home, siblings may be placed on the same campus. All
 68 efforts to place the siblings in the same home must be
 69 documented in each child's record.

70 b. If a foster home is not able to accept all siblings,
 71 the siblings must be placed in residential care. Siblings who
 72 are placed in residential care and who are stable must remain in
 73 such residential care until permanency can be attained.

74 (d) When adopting ~~In promulgating~~ licensing rules pursuant
 75 to this section, the department may make distinctions among

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76 | types of care; numbers of children served; and the physical,
77 | mental, emotional, and educational needs of the children to be
78 | served by a home or agency.

79 | Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2018.