

AN ACT concerning children.

**Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,
represented in the General Assembly:**

Section 5. The Children and Family Services Act is amended by changing Sections 5 and 35.10 as follows:

(20 ILCS 505/5)

(Text of Section before amendment by P.A. 104-107)

Sec. 5. Direct child welfare services; Department of Children and Family Services. To provide direct child welfare services when not available through other public or private child care or program facilities.

(a) For purposes of this Section:

(1) "Children" means persons found within the State who are under the age of 18 years. The term also includes persons under age 21 who:

(A) were committed to the Department pursuant to the Juvenile Court Act or the Juvenile Court Act of 1987 and who continue under the jurisdiction of the court; or

(B) were accepted for care, service and training by the Department prior to the age of 18 and whose best interest in the discretion of the Department would be served by continuing that care, service and training

because of severe emotional disturbances, physical disability, social adjustment or any combination thereof, or because of the need to complete an educational or vocational training program.

(2) "Homeless youth" means persons found within the State who are under the age of 19, are not in a safe and stable living situation and cannot be reunited with their families.

(3) "Child welfare services" means public social services which are directed toward the accomplishment of the following purposes:

(A) protecting and promoting the health, safety and welfare of children, including homeless, dependent, or neglected children;

(B) remedying, or assisting in the solution of problems which may result in, the neglect, abuse, exploitation, or delinquency of children;

(C) preventing the unnecessary separation of children from their families by identifying family problems, assisting families in resolving their problems, and preventing the breakup of the family where the prevention of child removal is desirable and possible when the child can be cared for at home without endangering the child's health and safety;

(D) restoring to their families children who have been removed, by the provision of services to the

child and the families when the child can be cared for at home without endangering the child's health and safety;

(E) placing children in suitable permanent family arrangements, through guardianship or adoption, in cases where restoration to the birth family is not safe, possible, or appropriate;

(F) at the time of placement, conducting concurrent planning, as described in subsection (1-1) of this Section, so that permanency may occur at the earliest opportunity. Consideration should be given so that if reunification fails or is delayed, the placement made is the best available placement to provide permanency for the child;

(G) (blank);

(H) (blank); and

(I) placing and maintaining children in facilities that provide separate living quarters for children under the age of 18 and for children 18 years of age and older, unless a child 18 years of age is in the last year of high school education or vocational training, in an approved individual or group treatment program, in a licensed shelter facility, or secure child care facility. The Department is not required to place or maintain children:

(i) who are in a foster home, or

(ii) who are persons with a developmental disability, as defined in the Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities Code, or

(iii) who are female children who are pregnant, pregnant and parenting, or parenting, or

(iv) who are siblings, in facilities that provide separate living quarters for children 18 years of age and older and for children under 18 years of age.

(b) (Blank).

(b-5) The Department shall adopt rules to establish a process for all licensed residential providers in Illinois to submit data as required by the Department if they contract or receive reimbursement for children's mental health, substance use, and developmental disability services from the Department of Human Services, the Department of Juvenile Justice, or the Department of Healthcare and Family Services. The requested data must include, but is not limited to, capacity, staffing, and occupancy data for the purpose of establishing State need and placement availability.

All information collected, shared, or stored pursuant to this subsection shall be handled in accordance with all State and federal privacy laws and accompanying regulations and rules, including, without limitation, the federal Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (Public Law 104-191) and the Mental Health and Developmental

Disabilities Confidentiality Act.

(c) The Department shall establish and maintain tax-supported child welfare services and extend and seek to improve voluntary services throughout the State, to the end that services and care shall be available on an equal basis throughout the State to children requiring such services.

(d) The Director may authorize advance disbursements for any new program initiative to any agency contracting with the Department. As a prerequisite for an advance disbursement, the contractor must post a surety bond in the amount of the advance disbursement and have a purchase of service contract approved by the Department. The Department may pay up to 2 months operational expenses in advance. The amount of the advance disbursement shall be prorated over the life of the contract or the remaining months of the fiscal year, whichever is less, and the installment amount shall then be deducted from future bills. Advance disbursement authorizations for new initiatives shall not be made to any agency after that agency has operated during 2 consecutive fiscal years. The requirements of this Section concerning advance disbursements shall not apply with respect to the following: payments to local public agencies for child day care services as authorized by Section 5a of this Act; and youth service programs receiving grant funds under Section 17a-4.

(e) (Blank).

(f) (Blank).

(g) The Department shall establish rules and regulations concerning its operation of programs designed to meet the goals of child safety and protection, family preservation, and permanency, including, but not limited to:

- (1) reunification, guardianship, and adoption;
- (2) relative and licensed foster care;
- (3) family counseling;
- (4) protective services;
- (5) (blank);
- (6) homemaker service;
- (7) return of runaway children;
- (8) (blank);

(9) placement under Section 5-7 of the Juvenile Court Act or Section 2-27, 3-28, 4-25, or 5-740 of the Juvenile Court Act of 1987 in accordance with the federal Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act of 1980; and

- (10) interstate services.

Rules and regulations established by the Department shall include provisions for training Department staff and the staff of Department grantees, through contracts with other agencies or resources, in screening techniques to identify substance use disorders, as defined in the Substance Use Disorder Act, approved by the Department of Human Services, as a successor to the Department of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse, for the purpose of identifying children and adults who should be referred for an assessment at an organization appropriately

licensed by the Department of Human Services for substance use disorder treatment.

(h) If the Department finds that there is no appropriate program or facility within or available to the Department for a youth in care and that no licensed private facility has an adequate and appropriate program or none agrees to accept the youth in care, the Department shall create an appropriate individualized, program-oriented plan for such youth in care. The plan may be developed within the Department or through purchase of services by the Department to the extent that it is within its statutory authority to do.

(i) Service programs shall be available throughout the State and shall include but not be limited to the following services:

- (1) case management;
- (2) homemakers;
- (3) counseling;
- (4) parent education;
- (5) day care;
- (6) emergency assistance and advocacy; and
- (7) kinship navigator and relative caregiver supports.

In addition, the following services may be made available to assess and meet the needs of children and families:

- (1) comprehensive family-based services;
- (2) assessments;
- (3) respite care; and

(4) in-home health services.

The Department shall provide transportation for any of the services it makes available to children or families or for which it refers children or families.

(j) The Department may provide categories of financial assistance and education assistance grants, and shall establish rules and regulations concerning the assistance and grants, to persons who adopt or become subsidized guardians of children with physical or mental disabilities, children who are older, or other hard-to-place children who (i) immediately prior to their adoption or subsidized guardianship were youth in care or (ii) were determined eligible for financial assistance with respect to a prior adoption and who become available for adoption because the prior adoption has been dissolved and the parental rights of the adoptive parents have been terminated or because the child's adoptive parents have died. The Department may continue to provide financial assistance and education assistance grants for a child who was determined eligible for financial assistance under this subsection (j) in the interim period beginning when the child's adoptive parents died and ending with the finalization of the new adoption of the child by another adoptive parent or parents. The Department may also provide categories of financial assistance and education assistance grants, and shall establish rules and regulations for the assistance and grants, to persons appointed guardian of the person under

Section 5-7 of the Juvenile Court Act or Section 2-27, 3-28, 4-25, or 5-740 of the Juvenile Court Act of 1987 for children who were youth in care for 12 months immediately prior to the appointment of the guardian.

The amount of assistance may vary, depending upon the needs of the child and the adoptive parents or subsidized guardians, as set forth in the annual assistance agreement. Special purpose grants are allowed where the child requires special service but such costs may not exceed the amounts which similar services would cost the Department if it were to provide or secure them as guardian of the child.

Any financial assistance provided under this subsection is inalienable by assignment, sale, execution, attachment, garnishment, or any other remedy for recovery or collection of a judgment or debt.

(j-5) The Department shall not deny or delay the placement of a child for adoption if an approved family is available either outside of the Department region handling the case, or outside of the State of Illinois.

(k) The Department shall accept for care and training any child who has been adjudicated neglected or abused, or dependent committed to it pursuant to the Juvenile Court Act or the Juvenile Court Act of 1987.

(l) The Department shall offer family preservation services, as defined in Section 8.2 of the Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act, to help families, including

adoptive and extended families. Family preservation services shall be offered (i) to prevent the placement of children in substitute care when the children can be cared for at home or in the custody of the person responsible for the children's welfare, (ii) to reunite children with their families, or (iii) to maintain an adoption or subsidized guardianship. Family preservation services shall only be offered when doing so will not endanger the children's health or safety. With respect to children who are in substitute care pursuant to the Juvenile Court Act of 1987, family preservation services shall not be offered if a goal other than those of subdivisions (A), (B), or (B-1) of subsection (2.3) of Section 2-28 of that Act has been set, except that reunification services may be offered as provided in paragraph (F) of subsection (2.3) of Section 2-28 of that Act. Nothing in this paragraph shall be construed to create a private right of action or claim on the part of any individual or child welfare agency, except that when a child is the subject of an action under Article II of the Juvenile Court Act of 1987 and the child's service plan calls for services to facilitate achievement of the permanency goal, the court hearing the action under Article II of the Juvenile Court Act of 1987 may order the Department to provide the services set out in the plan, if those services are not provided with reasonable promptness and if those services are available.

The Department shall notify the child and the child's

family of the Department's responsibility to offer and provide family preservation services as identified in the service plan. The child and the child's family shall be eligible for services as soon as the report is determined to be "indicated". The Department may offer services to any child or family with respect to whom a report of suspected child abuse or neglect has been filed, prior to concluding its investigation under Section 7.12 of the Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act. However, the child's or family's willingness to accept services shall not be considered in the investigation. The Department may also provide services to any child or family who is the subject of any report of suspected child abuse or neglect or may refer such child or family to services available from other agencies in the community, even if the report is determined to be unfounded, if the conditions in the child's or family's home are reasonably likely to subject the child or family to future reports of suspected child abuse or neglect. Acceptance of such services shall be voluntary. The Department may also provide services to any child or family after completion of a family assessment, as an alternative to an investigation, as provided under the "differential response program" provided for in subsection (a-5) of Section 7.4 of the Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act.

The Department may, at its discretion except for those children also adjudicated neglected or dependent, accept for

care and training any child who has been adjudicated addicted, as a truant minor in need of supervision or as a minor requiring authoritative intervention, under the Juvenile Court Act or the Juvenile Court Act of 1987, but no such child shall be committed to the Department by any court without the approval of the Department. On and after January 1, 2015 (the effective date of Public Act 98-803) and before January 1, 2017, a minor charged with a criminal offense under the Criminal Code of 1961 or the Criminal Code of 2012 or adjudicated delinquent shall not be placed in the custody of or committed to the Department by any court, except (i) a minor less than 16 years of age committed to the Department under Section 5-710 of the Juvenile Court Act of 1987, (ii) a minor for whom an independent basis of abuse, neglect, or dependency exists, which must be defined by departmental rule, or (iii) a minor for whom the court has granted a supplemental petition to reinstate wardship pursuant to subsection (2) of Section 2-33 of the Juvenile Court Act of 1987. On and after January 1, 2017, a minor charged with a criminal offense under the Criminal Code of 1961 or the Criminal Code of 2012 or adjudicated delinquent shall not be placed in the custody of or committed to the Department by any court, except (i) a minor less than 15 years of age committed to the Department under Section 5-710 of the Juvenile Court Act of 1987, (ii) a minor for whom an independent basis of abuse, neglect, or dependency exists, which must be defined by departmental rule, or (iii) a

minor for whom the court has granted a supplemental petition to reinstate wardship pursuant to subsection (2) of Section 2-33 of the Juvenile Court Act of 1987. An independent basis exists when the allegations or adjudication of abuse, neglect, or dependency do not arise from the same facts, incident, or circumstances which give rise to a charge or adjudication of delinquency. The Department shall assign a caseworker to attend any hearing involving a youth in the care and custody of the Department who is placed on aftercare release, including hearings involving sanctions for violation of aftercare release conditions and aftercare release revocation hearings.

As soon as is possible, the Department shall develop and implement a special program of family preservation services to support intact, relative, foster, and adoptive families who are experiencing extreme hardships due to the difficulty and stress of caring for a child who has been diagnosed with a pervasive developmental disorder if the Department determines that those services are necessary to ensure the health and safety of the child. The Department may offer services to any family whether or not a report has been filed under the Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act. The Department may refer the child or family to services available from other agencies in the community if the conditions in the child's or family's home are reasonably likely to subject the child or family to future reports of suspected child abuse or neglect. Acceptance of these services shall be voluntary. The Department shall

develop and implement a public information campaign to alert health and social service providers and the general public about these special family preservation services. The nature and scope of the services offered and the number of families served under the special program implemented under this paragraph shall be determined by the level of funding that the Department annually allocates for this purpose. The term "pervasive developmental disorder" under this paragraph means a neurological condition, including, but not limited to, Asperger's Syndrome and autism, as defined in the most recent edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders of the American Psychiatric Association.

(1-1) The General Assembly recognizes that the best interests of the child require that the child be placed in the most permanent living arrangement that is an appropriate option for the child, consistent with the child's best interest, using the factors set forth in subsection (4.05) of Section 1-3 of the Juvenile Court Act of 1987 as soon as is practically possible. To achieve this goal, the General Assembly directs the Department of Children and Family Services to conduct concurrent planning so that permanency may occur at the earliest opportunity. Permanent living arrangements may include prevention of placement of a child outside the home of the family when the child can be cared for at home without endangering the child's health or safety; reunification with the family, when safe and appropriate, if

temporary placement is necessary; or movement of the child toward the most appropriate living arrangement and legal status.

When determining reasonable efforts to be made with respect to a child, as described in this subsection, and in making such reasonable efforts, the child's health and safety shall be the paramount concern.

When a child is placed in foster care, the Department shall ensure and document that reasonable efforts were made to prevent or eliminate the need to remove the child from the child's home. The Department must make reasonable efforts to reunify the family when temporary placement of the child occurs unless otherwise required, pursuant to the Juvenile Court Act of 1987. At any time after the dispositional hearing where the Department believes that further reunification services would be ineffective, it may request a finding from the court that reasonable efforts are no longer appropriate. The Department is not required to provide further reunification services after such a finding.

A decision to place a child in substitute care shall be made with considerations of the child's health, safety, and best interests. The Department shall make diligent efforts to place the child with a relative, document those diligent efforts, and document reasons for any failure or inability to secure such a relative placement. If the primary issue preventing an emergency placement of a child with a relative

is a lack of resources, including, but not limited to, concrete goods, safety modifications, and services, the Department shall make diligent efforts to assist the relative in obtaining the necessary resources. No later than July 1, 2025, the Department shall adopt rules defining what is diligent and necessary in providing supports to potential relative placements. At the time of placement, consideration should also be given so that if reunification fails or is delayed, the placement has the potential to be an appropriate permanent placement for the child.

The Department shall adopt rules addressing concurrent planning for reunification and permanency. The Department shall consider the following factors when determining appropriateness of concurrent planning:

- (1) the likelihood of prompt reunification;
- (2) the past history of the family;
- (3) the barriers to reunification being addressed by the family;
- (4) the level of cooperation of the family;
- (4.5) the child's wishes;
- (5) the caregivers' willingness to work with the family to reunite;
- (6) the willingness and ability of the caregivers' to provide a permanent placement;
- (7) the age of the child;
- (8) placement of siblings; and

(9) the wishes of the parent or parents unless the parental preferences are contrary to the best interests of the child.

(m) The Department may assume temporary custody of any child if:

(1) it has received a written consent to such temporary custody signed by the parents of the child or by the parent having custody of the child if the parents are not living together or by the guardian or custodian of the child if the child is not in the custody of either parent, or

(2) the child is found in the State and neither a parent, guardian nor custodian of the child can be located.

If the child is found in the child's residence without a parent, guardian, custodian, or responsible caretaker, the Department may, instead of removing the child and assuming temporary custody, place an authorized representative of the Department in that residence until such time as a parent, guardian, or custodian enters the home and expresses a willingness and apparent ability to ensure the child's health and safety and resume permanent charge of the child, or until a relative enters the home and is willing and able to ensure the child's health and safety and assume charge of the child until a parent, guardian, or custodian enters the home and expresses such willingness and ability to ensure the child's safety and

resume permanent charge. After a caretaker has remained in the home for a period not to exceed 12 hours, the Department must follow those procedures outlined in Section 2-9, 3-11, 4-8, or 5-415 of the Juvenile Court Act of 1987.

The Department shall have the authority, responsibilities and duties that a legal custodian of the child would have pursuant to subsection (9) of Section 1-3 of the Juvenile Court Act of 1987. Whenever a child is taken into temporary custody pursuant to an investigation under the Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act, or pursuant to a referral and acceptance under the Juvenile Court Act of 1987 of a minor in limited custody, the Department, during the period of temporary custody and before the child is brought before a judicial officer as required by Section 2-9, 3-11, 4-8, or 5-415 of the Juvenile Court Act of 1987, shall have the authority, responsibilities and duties that a legal custodian of the child would have under subsection (9) of Section 1-3 of the Juvenile Court Act of 1987.

The Department shall ensure that any child taken into custody is scheduled for an appointment for a medical examination.

A parent, guardian, or custodian of a child in the temporary custody of the Department who would have custody of the child if the child were not in the temporary custody of the Department may deliver to the Department a signed request that the Department surrender the temporary custody of the child.

The Department may retain temporary custody of the child for 10 days after the receipt of the request, during which period the Department may cause to be filed a petition pursuant to the Juvenile Court Act of 1987. If a petition is so filed, the Department shall retain temporary custody of the child until the court orders otherwise. If a petition is not filed within the 10-day period, the child shall be surrendered to the custody of the requesting parent, guardian, or custodian not later than the expiration of the 10-day period, at which time the authority and duties of the Department with respect to the temporary custody of the child shall terminate.

(m-1) The Department may place children under 18 years of age in a secure child care facility licensed by the Department that cares for children who are in need of secure living arrangements for their health, safety, and well-being after a determination is made by the facility director and the Director or the Director's designate prior to admission to the facility subject to Section 2-27.1 of the Juvenile Court Act of 1987. This subsection (m-1) does not apply to a child who is subject to placement in a correctional facility operated pursuant to Section 3-15-2 of the Unified Code of Corrections, unless the child is a youth in care who was placed in the care of the Department before being subject to placement in a correctional facility and a court of competent jurisdiction has ordered placement of the child in a secure care facility.

(n) The Department may place children under 18 years of

age in licensed child care facilities when in the opinion of the Department, appropriate services aimed at family preservation have been unsuccessful and cannot ensure the child's health and safety or are unavailable and such placement would be for their best interest. Payment for board, clothing, care, training and supervision of any child placed in a licensed child care facility may be made by the Department, by the parents or guardians of the estates of those children, or by both the Department and the parents or guardians, except that no payments shall be made by the Department for any child placed in a licensed child care facility for board, clothing, care, training, and supervision of such a child that exceed the average per capita cost of maintaining and of caring for a child in institutions for dependent or neglected children operated by the Department. However, such restriction on payments does not apply in cases where children require specialized care and treatment for problems of severe emotional disturbance, physical disability, social adjustment, or any combination thereof and suitable facilities for the placement of such children are not available at payment rates within the limitations set forth in this Section. All reimbursements for services delivered shall be absolutely inalienable by assignment, sale, attachment, or garnishment or otherwise.

(n-1) The Department shall provide or authorize child welfare services, aimed at assisting minors to achieve

sustainable self-sufficiency as independent adults, for any minor eligible for the reinstatement of wardship pursuant to subsection (2) of Section 2-33 of the Juvenile Court Act of 1987, whether or not such reinstatement is sought or allowed, provided that the minor consents to such services and has not yet attained the age of 21. The Department shall have responsibility for the development and delivery of services under this Section. An eligible youth may access services under this Section through the Department of Children and Family Services or by referral from the Department of Human Services. Youth participating in services under this Section shall cooperate with the assigned case manager in developing an agreement identifying the services to be provided and how the youth will increase skills to achieve self-sufficiency. A homeless shelter is not considered appropriate housing for any youth receiving child welfare services under this Section. The Department shall continue child welfare services under this Section to any eligible minor until the minor becomes 21 years of age, no longer consents to participate, or achieves self-sufficiency as identified in the minor's service plan. The Department of Children and Family Services shall create clear, readable notice of the rights of former foster youth to child welfare services under this Section and how such services may be obtained. The Department of Children and Family Services and the Department of Human Services shall disseminate this information statewide. The Department shall

adopt regulations describing services intended to assist minors in achieving sustainable self-sufficiency as independent adults.

(o) The Department shall establish an administrative review and appeal process for children and families who request or receive child welfare services from the Department. Youth in care who are placed by private child welfare agencies, and caregivers with whom those youth are placed, shall be afforded the same procedural and appeal rights as children and families in the case of placement by the Department, including the right to an initial review of a private agency decision by that agency. The Department shall ensure that any private child welfare agency, which accepts youth in care for placement, affords those rights to children and caregivers with whom those children are placed. The Department shall accept for administrative review and an appeal hearing a complaint made by (i) a child or caregiver with whom the child is placed concerning a decision following an initial review by a private child welfare agency or (ii) a prospective adoptive parent who alleges a violation of subsection (j-5) of this Section. An appeal of a decision concerning a change in the placement of a child shall be conducted in an expedited manner. A court determination that a current placement is necessary and appropriate under Section 2-28 of the Juvenile Court Act of 1987 does not constitute a judicial determination on the merits of an administrative

appeal, filed by a former caregiver, involving a change of placement decision. No later than July 1, 2025, the Department shall adopt rules to develop a reconsideration process to review: a denial of certification of a relative, a denial of placement with a relative, and a denial of visitation with an identified relative. Rules shall include standards and criteria for reconsideration that incorporate the best interests of the child under subsection (4.05) of Section 1-3 of the Juvenile Court Act of 1987, address situations where multiple relatives seek certification, and provide that all rules regarding placement changes shall be followed. The rules shall outline the essential elements of each form used in the implementation and enforcement of the provisions of this amendatory Act of the 103rd General Assembly.

(p) (Blank).

(q) The Department may receive and use, in their entirety, for the benefit of children any gift, donation, or bequest of money or other property which is received on behalf of such children, or any financial benefits to which such children are or may become entitled while under the jurisdiction or care of the Department, except that the benefits described in Section 5.46 must be used and conserved consistent with the provisions under Section 5.46.

The Department shall set up and administer no-cost, interest-bearing accounts in appropriate financial institutions for children for whom the Department is legally

responsible and who have been determined eligible for Veterans' Benefits, Social Security benefits, assistance allotments from the armed forces, court ordered payments, parental voluntary payments, Supplemental Security Income, Railroad Retirement payments, Black Lung benefits, or other miscellaneous payments. Interest earned by each account shall be credited to the account, unless disbursed in accordance with this subsection.

In disbursing funds from children's accounts, the Department shall:

(1) Establish standards in accordance with State and federal laws for disbursing money from children's accounts. In all circumstances, the Department's Guardianship Administrator or the Guardianship Administrator's designee must approve disbursements from children's accounts. The Department shall be responsible for keeping complete records of all disbursements for each account for any purpose.

(2) Calculate on a monthly basis the amounts paid from State funds for the child's board and care, medical care not covered under Medicaid, and social services; and utilize funds from the child's account, as covered by regulation, to reimburse those costs. Monthly, disbursements from all children's accounts, up to 1/12 of \$13,000,000, shall be deposited by the Department into the General Revenue Fund and the balance over 1/12 of

\$13,000,000 into the DCFS Children's Services Fund.

(3) Maintain any balance remaining after reimbursing for the child's costs of care, as specified in item (2). The balance shall accumulate in accordance with relevant State and federal laws and shall be disbursed to the child or the child's guardian or to the issuing agency.

(r) The Department shall promulgate regulations encouraging all adoption agencies to voluntarily forward to the Department or its agent names and addresses of all persons who have applied for and have been approved for adoption of a hard-to-place child or child with a disability and the names of such children who have not been placed for adoption. A list of such names and addresses shall be maintained by the Department or its agent, and coded lists which maintain the confidentiality of the person seeking to adopt the child and of the child shall be made available, without charge, to every adoption agency in the State to assist the agencies in placing such children for adoption. The Department may delegate to an agent its duty to maintain and make available such lists. The Department shall ensure that such agent maintains the confidentiality of the person seeking to adopt the child and of the child.

(s) The Department of Children and Family Services may establish and implement a program to reimburse caregivers licensed, certified, or otherwise approved by the Department of Children and Family Services for damages sustained by the

caregivers as a result of the malicious or negligent acts of children placed by the Department, as well as providing third party coverage for such caregivers with regard to actions of children placed by the Department to other individuals. Such coverage will be secondary to the caregiver's liability insurance policy, if applicable. The program shall be funded through appropriations from the General Revenue Fund, specifically designated for such purposes.

(t) The Department shall perform home studies and investigations and shall exercise supervision over visitation as ordered by a court pursuant to the Illinois Marriage and Dissolution of Marriage Act or the Adoption Act only if:

(1) an order entered by an Illinois court specifically directs the Department to perform such services; and

(2) the court has ordered one or both of the parties to the proceeding to reimburse the Department for its reasonable costs for providing such services in accordance with Department rules, or has determined that neither party is financially able to pay.

The Department shall provide written notification to the court of the specific arrangements for supervised visitation and projected monthly costs within 60 days of the court order. The Department shall send to the court information related to the costs incurred except in cases where the court has determined the parties are financially unable to pay. The court may order additional periodic reports as appropriate.

(u) In addition to other information that must be provided, whenever the Department places a child with a prospective adoptive parent or parents, in a licensed foster home, group home, or child care institution, in a relative home, or in a certified relative caregiver home, the Department shall provide to the caregiver, appropriate facility staff, or prospective adoptive parent or parents:

(1) available detailed information concerning the child's educational and health history, copies of immunization records (including insurance and medical card information), a history of the child's previous placements, if any, and reasons for placement changes excluding any information that identifies or reveals the location of any previous caregiver or adoptive parents;

(2) a copy of the child's portion of the client service plan, including any visitation arrangement, and all amendments or revisions to it as related to the child; and

(3) information containing details of the child's individualized education program ~~educational plan~~ when the child is receiving special education services.

The caregiver, appropriate facility staff, or prospective adoptive parent or parents, shall be informed of any known social or behavioral information (including, but not limited to, criminal background, fire setting, perpetuation of sexual abuse, destructive behavior, and substance abuse) necessary to

care for and safeguard the children to be placed or currently in the home or setting. The Department may prepare a written summary of the information required by this paragraph, which may be provided to the caregiver, appropriate facility staff, or prospective adoptive parent in advance of a placement. The caregiver, appropriate facility staff, or prospective adoptive parent may review the supporting documents in the child's file in the presence of casework staff. In the case of an emergency placement, casework staff shall at least provide known information verbally, if necessary, and must subsequently provide the information in writing as required by this subsection.

The information described in this subsection shall be provided in writing. In the case of emergency placements when time does not allow prior review, preparation, and collection of written information, the Department shall provide such information as it becomes available. Within 10 business days after placement, the Department shall obtain from the caregiver, appropriate facility staff, or prospective adoptive parent or parents a signed verification of receipt of the information provided. Within 10 business days after placement, the Department shall provide to the child's guardian ad litem a copy of the information provided to the caregiver, appropriate facility staff, or prospective adoptive parent or parents. The information provided to the caregiver, appropriate facility staff, or prospective adoptive parent or

parents shall be reviewed and approved regarding accuracy at the supervisory level.

(u-5) Beginning July 1, 2025, certified relative caregiver homes under Section 3.4 of the Child Care Act of 1969 shall be eligible to receive foster care maintenance payments from the Department in an amount no less than payments made to licensed foster family homes. Beginning July 1, 2025, relative homes providing care to a child placed by the Department that are not a certified relative caregiver home under Section 3.4 of the Child Care Act of 1969 or a licensed foster family home shall be eligible to receive payments from the Department in an amount no less 90% of the payments made to licensed foster family homes and certified relative caregiver homes.

(u-6) To assist relative and certified relative caregivers, no later than July 1, 2025, the Department shall adopt rules to implement a relative support program, as follows:

(1) For relative and certified relative caregivers, the Department is authorized to reimburse or prepay reasonable expenditures to remedy home conditions necessary to fulfill the home safety-related requirements of relative caregiver homes.

(2) The Department may provide short-term emergency funds to relative and certified relative caregiver homes experiencing extreme hardships due to the difficulty and stress associated with adding youth in care as new

household members.

(3) Consistent with federal law, the Department shall include in any State Plan made in accordance with the Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act of 1980, Titles IV-E and XIX of the Social Security Act, and any other applicable federal laws the provision of kinship navigator program services. The Department shall apply for and administer all relevant federal aid in accordance with law. Federal funds acquired for the kinship navigator program shall be used for the development, implementation, and operation of kinship navigator program services. The kinship navigator program services may provide information, referral services, support, and assistance to relative and certified relative caregivers of youth in care to address their unique needs and challenges. Until the Department is approved to receive federal funds for these purposes, the Department shall publicly post on the Department's website semi-annual updates regarding the Department's progress in pursuing federal funding. Whenever the Department publicly posts these updates on its website, the Department shall notify the General Assembly through the General Assembly's designee.

(u-7) To support finding permanency for children through subsidized guardianship and adoption and to prevent disruption in guardianship and adoptive placements, the Department shall establish and maintain accessible subsidized guardianship and

adoption support services for all children under 18 years of age placed in guardianship or adoption who, immediately preceding the guardianship or adoption, were in the custody or guardianship of the Department under Article II of the Juvenile Court Act of 1987.

The Department shall establish and maintain a toll-free number to respond to requests from the public about its subsidized guardianship and adoption support services under this subsection and shall staff the toll-free number so that calls are answered on a timely basis, but in no event more than one business day after the receipt of a request. These requests from the public may be made anonymously. To meet this obligation, the Department may utilize the same toll-free number the Department operates to respond to post-adoption requests under subsection (b-5) of Section 18.9 of the Adoption Act. The Department shall publicize information about the Department's subsidized guardianship support services and toll-free number as follows:

- (1) it shall post information on the Department's website;

- (2) it shall provide the information to every licensed child welfare agency and any entity providing subsidized guardianship support services in Illinois courts;

- (3) it shall reference such information in the materials the Department provides to caregivers pursuing subsidized guardianship to inform them of their rights and

responsibilities under the Child Care Act of 1969 and this Act;

(4) it shall provide the information, including the Department's Post Adoption and Guardianship Services booklet, to eligible caregivers as part of its guardianship training and at the time they are presented with the Permanency Commitment form;

(5) it shall include, in each annual notification letter mailed to subsidized guardians, a short, 2-sided flier or news bulletin in plain language that describes access to post-guardianship services, how to access services under the Family Support Program, formerly known as the Individual Care Grant Program, the webpage address to the Post Adoption and Guardianship Services booklet, information on how to request that a copy of the booklet be mailed; and

(6) it shall ensure that kinship navigator programs of this State, when established, have this information to include in materials the programs provide to caregivers.

No later than July 1, 2026, the Department shall provide a mechanism for the public to make information requests by electronic means.

The Department shall review and update annually all information relating to its subsidized guardianship support services, including its Post Adoption and Guardianship Services booklet, to include updated information on Family

Support Program services eligibility and subsidized guardianship support services that are available through the medical assistance program established under Article V of the Illinois Public Aid Code or any other State program for mental health services. The Department and the Department of Healthcare and Family Services shall coordinate their efforts in the development of these resources.

Every licensed child welfare agency and any entity providing kinship navigator programs funded by the Department shall provide the Department's website address and link to the Department's subsidized guardianship support services information set forth in subsection (d), including the Department's toll-free number, to every relative who is or will be providing guardianship placement for a child placed by the Department.

(v) The Department shall access criminal history record information as defined in the Illinois Uniform Conviction Information Act and information maintained in the adjudicatory and dispositional record system as defined in Section 2605-355 of the Illinois State Police Law if the Department determines the information is necessary to perform its duties under the Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act, the Child Care Act of 1969, and the Children and Family Services Act. The Department shall provide for interactive computerized communication and processing equipment that permits direct online ~~on-line~~ communication with the Illinois State Police's

central criminal history data repository. The Department shall comply with all certification requirements and provide certified operators who have been trained by personnel from the Illinois State Police. In addition, one Office of the Inspector General investigator shall have training in the use of the criminal history information access system and have access to the terminal. The Department of Children and Family Services and its employees shall abide by rules and regulations established by the Illinois State Police relating to the access and dissemination of this information.

(v-1) Prior to final approval for placement of a child with a foster or adoptive parent, the Department shall conduct a criminal records background check of the prospective foster or adoptive parent, including fingerprint-based checks of national crime information databases. Final approval for placement shall not be granted if the record check reveals a felony conviction for child abuse or neglect, for spousal abuse, for a crime against children, or for a crime involving violence, including human trafficking, sex trafficking, rape, sexual assault, or homicide, but not including other physical assault or battery, or if there is a felony conviction for physical assault, battery, or a drug-related offense committed within the past 5 years.

(v-2) Prior to final approval for placement of a child with a foster or adoptive parent, the Department shall check its child abuse and neglect registry for information

concerning prospective foster and adoptive parents, and any adult living in the home. If any prospective foster or adoptive parent or other adult living in the home has resided in another state in the preceding 5 years, the Department shall request a check of that other state's child abuse and neglect registry.

(v-3) Prior to the final approval of final placement of a related child in a certified relative caregiver home as defined in Section 2.37 of the Child Care Act of 1969, the Department shall ensure that the background screening meets the standards required under subsection (c) of Section 3.4 of the Child Care Act of 1969.

(v-4) Prior to final approval for placement of a child with a relative, as defined in Section 4d of this Act, who is not a licensed foster parent, has declined to seek approval to be a certified relative caregiver, or was denied approval as a certified relative caregiver, the Department shall:

(i) check the child abuse and neglect registry for information concerning the prospective relative caregiver and any other adult living in the home. If any prospective relative caregiver or other adult living in the home has resided in another state in the preceding 5 years, the Department shall request a check of that other state's child abuse and neglect registry; and

(ii) conduct a criminal records background check of the prospective relative caregiver and all other adults

living in the home, including fingerprint-based checks of national crime information databases. Final approval for placement shall not be granted if the record check reveals a felony conviction for child abuse or neglect, for spousal abuse, for a crime against children, or for a crime involving violence, including human trafficking, sex trafficking, rape, sexual assault, or homicide, but not including other physical assault or battery, or if there is a felony conviction for physical assault, battery, or a drug-related offense committed within the past 5 years; provided however, that the Department is empowered to grant a waiver as the Department may provide by rule, and the Department approves the request for the waiver based on a comprehensive evaluation of the caregiver and household members and the conditions relating to the safety of the placement.

No later than July 1, 2025, the Department shall adopt rules or revise existing rules to effectuate the changes made to this subsection (v-4). The rules shall outline the essential elements of each form used in the implementation and enforcement of the provisions of this amendatory Act of the 103rd General Assembly.

(w) (Blank).

(x) The Department shall conduct annual credit history checks to determine the financial history of children placed under its guardianship pursuant to the Juvenile Court Act of

1987. The Department shall conduct such credit checks starting when a youth in care turns 12 years old and each year thereafter for the duration of the guardianship as terminated pursuant to the Juvenile Court Act of 1987. The Department shall determine if financial exploitation of the child's personal information has occurred. If financial exploitation appears to have taken place or is presently ongoing, the Department shall notify the proper law enforcement agency, the proper State's Attorney, or the Attorney General.

(y) Beginning on July 22, 2010 (the effective date of Public Act 96-1189), a child with a disability who receives residential and educational services from the Department shall be eligible to receive transition services in accordance with Article 14 of the School Code from the age of 14.5 through age 21, inclusive, notwithstanding the child's residential services arrangement. For purposes of this subsection, "child with a disability" means a child with a disability as defined by the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004.

(z) The Department shall access criminal history record information as defined as "background information" in this subsection and criminal history record information as defined in the Illinois Uniform Conviction Information Act for each Department employee or Department applicant. Each Department employee or Department applicant shall submit the employee's or applicant's fingerprints to the Illinois State Police in

the form and manner prescribed by the Illinois State Police. These fingerprints shall be checked against the fingerprint records now and hereafter filed in the Illinois State Police and the Federal Bureau of Investigation criminal history records databases. The Illinois State Police shall charge a fee for conducting the criminal history record check, which shall be deposited into the State Police Services Fund and shall not exceed the actual cost of the record check. The Illinois State Police shall furnish, pursuant to positive identification, all Illinois conviction information to the Department of Children and Family Services.

For purposes of this subsection:

"Background information" means all of the following:

(i) Upon the request of the Department of Children and Family Services, conviction information obtained from the Illinois State Police as a result of a fingerprint-based criminal history records check of the Illinois criminal history records database and the Federal Bureau of Investigation criminal history records database concerning a Department employee or Department applicant.

(ii) Information obtained by the Department of Children and Family Services after performing a check of the Illinois State Police's Sex Offender Database, as authorized by Section 120 of the Sex Offender Community Notification Law, concerning a Department employee or Department applicant.

(iii) Information obtained by the Department of Children and Family Services after performing a check of the Child Abuse and Neglect Tracking System (CANTS) operated and maintained by the Department.

"Department employee" means a full-time or temporary employee coded or certified within the State of Illinois Personnel System.

"Department applicant" means an individual who has conditional Department full-time or part-time work, a contractor, an individual used to replace or supplement staff, an academic intern, a volunteer in Department offices or on Department contracts, a work-study student, an individual or entity licensed by the Department, or an unlicensed service provider who works as a condition of a contract or an agreement and whose work may bring the unlicensed service provider into contact with Department clients or client records.

(aa) The changes made to this Section by Public Act 104-165 ~~this amendatory Act of the 104th General Assembly~~ are declarative of existing law and are not a new enactment.

(Source: P.A. 103-22, eff. 8-8-23; 103-50, eff. 1-1-24; 103-546, eff. 8-11-23; 103-605, eff. 7-1-24; 103-1061, eff. 7-1-25; 104-165, eff. 8-15-25; revised 9-11-25.)

(Text of Section after amendment by P.A. 104-107)

Sec. 5. Direct child welfare services; Department of Children and Family Services. To provide direct child welfare

services when not available through other public or private child care or program facilities.

(a) For purposes of this Section:

(1) "Children" means persons found within the State who are under the age of 18 years. The term also includes persons under age 21 who:

(A) were committed to the Department pursuant to the Juvenile Court Act or the Juvenile Court Act of 1987 and who continue under the jurisdiction of the court; or

(B) were accepted for care, service and training by the Department prior to the age of 18 and whose best interest in the discretion of the Department would be served by continuing that care, service and training because of severe emotional disturbances, physical disability, social adjustment or any combination thereof, or because of the need to complete an educational or vocational training program.

(2) "Homeless youth" means persons found within the State who are under the age of 19, are not in a safe and stable living situation and cannot be reunited with their families.

(3) "Child welfare services" means public social services which are directed toward the accomplishment of the following purposes:

(A) protecting and promoting the health, safety

and welfare of children, including homeless, dependent, or neglected children;

(B) remedying, or assisting in the solution of problems which may result in, the neglect, abuse, exploitation, or delinquency of children;

(C) preventing the unnecessary separation of children from their families by identifying family problems, assisting families in resolving their problems, and preventing the breakup of the family where the prevention of child removal is desirable and possible when the child can be cared for at home without endangering the child's health and safety;

(D) restoring to their families children who have been removed, by the provision of services to the child and the families when the child can be cared for at home without endangering the child's health and safety;

(E) placing children in suitable permanent family arrangements, through guardianship or adoption, in cases where restoration to the birth family is not safe, possible, or appropriate;

(F) at the time of placement, conducting concurrent planning, as described in subsection (1-1) of this Section, so that permanency may occur at the earliest opportunity. Consideration should be given so that if reunification fails or is delayed, the

placement made is the best available placement to provide permanency for the child;

(F-1) preparing adolescents to successfully transition to independence, including transition planning for youth who qualify for a guardian as a person with a disability under Article XIa of the Probate Act of 1975;

(G) (blank);

(H) (blank); and

(I) placing and maintaining children in facilities that provide separate living quarters for children under the age of 18 and for children 18 years of age and older, unless a child 18 years of age is in the last year of high school education or vocational training, in an approved individual or group treatment program, in a licensed shelter facility, or secure child care facility. The Department is not required to place or maintain children:

(i) who are in a foster home, or

(ii) who are persons with a developmental disability, as defined in the Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities Code, or

(iii) who are female children who are pregnant, pregnant and parenting, or parenting, or

(iv) who are siblings, in facilities that provide separate living quarters for children 18

years of age and older and for children under 18 years of age.

(b) (Blank).

(b-5) The Department shall adopt rules to establish a process for all licensed residential providers in Illinois to submit data as required by the Department if they contract or receive reimbursement for children's mental health, substance use, and developmental disability services from the Department of Human Services, the Department of Juvenile Justice, or the Department of Healthcare and Family Services. The requested data must include, but is not limited to, capacity, staffing, and occupancy data for the purpose of establishing State need and placement availability.

All information collected, shared, or stored pursuant to this subsection shall be handled in accordance with all State and federal privacy laws and accompanying regulations and rules, including, without limitation, the federal Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (Public Law 104-191) and the Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities Confidentiality Act.

(c) The Department shall establish and maintain tax-supported child welfare services and extend and seek to improve voluntary services throughout the State, to the end that services and care shall be available on an equal basis throughout the State to children requiring such services.

(d) The Director may authorize advance disbursements for

any new program initiative to any agency contracting with the Department. As a prerequisite for an advance disbursement, the contractor must post a surety bond in the amount of the advance disbursement and have a purchase of service contract approved by the Department. The Department may pay up to 2 months operational expenses in advance. The amount of the advance disbursement shall be prorated over the life of the contract or the remaining months of the fiscal year, whichever is less, and the installment amount shall then be deducted from future bills. Advance disbursement authorizations for new initiatives shall not be made to any agency after that agency has operated during 2 consecutive fiscal years. The requirements of this Section concerning advance disbursements shall not apply with respect to the following: payments to local public agencies for child day care services as authorized by Section 5a of this Act; and youth service programs receiving grant funds under Section 17a-4.

(e) (Blank).

(f) (Blank).

(g) The Department shall establish rules and regulations concerning its operation of programs designed to meet the goals of child safety and protection, family preservation, and permanency, including, but not limited to:

- (1) reunification, guardianship, and adoption;
- (2) relative and licensed foster care;
- (3) family counseling;

- (4) protective services;
- (5) (blank);
- (6) homemaker service;
- (7) return of runaway children;
- (8) (blank);

(9) placement under Section 5-7 of the Juvenile Court Act or Section 2-27, 3-28, 4-25, or 5-740 of the Juvenile Court Act of 1987 in accordance with the federal Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act of 1980;

(10) interstate services; and

(11) transition planning for youth aging out of care.

Rules and regulations established by the Department shall include provisions for training Department staff and the staff of Department grantees, through contracts with other agencies or resources, in screening techniques to identify substance use disorders, as defined in the Substance Use Disorder Act, approved by the Department of Human Services, as a successor to the Department of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse, for the purpose of identifying children and adults who should be referred for an assessment at an organization appropriately licensed by the Department of Human Services for substance use disorder treatment.

(h) If the Department finds that there is no appropriate program or facility within or available to the Department for a youth in care and that no licensed private facility has an adequate and appropriate program or none agrees to accept the

youth in care, the Department shall create an appropriate individualized, program-oriented plan for such youth in care. The plan may be developed within the Department or through purchase of services by the Department to the extent that it is within its statutory authority to do.

(i) Service programs shall be available throughout the State and shall include but not be limited to the following services:

- (1) case management;
- (2) homemakers;
- (3) counseling;
- (4) parent education;
- (5) day care;
- (6) emergency assistance and advocacy; and
- (7) kinship navigator and relative caregiver supports.

In addition, the following services may be made available to assess and meet the needs of children and families:

- (1) comprehensive family-based services;
- (2) assessments;
- (3) respite care; and
- (4) in-home health services.

The Department shall provide transportation for any of the services it makes available to children or families or for which it refers children or families.

(j) The Department may provide categories of financial assistance and education assistance grants, and shall

establish rules and regulations concerning the assistance and grants, to persons who adopt or become subsidized guardians of children with physical or mental disabilities, children who are older, or other hard-to-place children who (i) immediately prior to their adoption or subsidized guardianship were youth in care or (ii) were determined eligible for financial assistance with respect to a prior adoption and who become available for adoption because the prior adoption has been dissolved and the parental rights of the adoptive parents have been terminated or because the child's adoptive parents have died. The Department may continue to provide financial assistance and education assistance grants for a child who was determined eligible for financial assistance under this subsection (j) in the interim period beginning when the child's adoptive parents died and ending with the finalization of the new adoption of the child by another adoptive parent or parents. The Department may also provide categories of financial assistance and education assistance grants, and shall establish rules and regulations for the assistance and grants, to persons appointed guardian of the person under Section 5-7 of the Juvenile Court Act or Section 2-27, 3-28, 4-25, or 5-740 of the Juvenile Court Act of 1987 for children who were youth in care for 12 months immediately prior to the appointment of the guardian.

The amount of assistance may vary, depending upon the needs of the child and the adoptive parents or subsidized

guardians, as set forth in the annual assistance agreement. Special purpose grants are allowed where the child requires special service but such costs may not exceed the amounts which similar services would cost the Department if it were to provide or secure them as guardian of the child.

Any financial assistance provided under this subsection is inalienable by assignment, sale, execution, attachment, garnishment, or any other remedy for recovery or collection of a judgment or debt.

(j-5) The Department shall not deny or delay the placement of a child for adoption if an approved family is available either outside of the Department region handling the case, or outside of the State of Illinois.

(k) The Department shall accept for care and training any child who has been adjudicated neglected or abused, or dependent committed to it pursuant to the Juvenile Court Act or the Juvenile Court Act of 1987.

(l) The Department shall offer family preservation services, as defined in Section 8.2 of the Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act, to help families, including adoptive and extended families. Family preservation services shall be offered (i) to prevent the placement of children in substitute care when the children can be cared for at home or in the custody of the person responsible for the children's welfare, (ii) to reunite children with their families, or (iii) to maintain an adoption or subsidized guardianship.

Family preservation services shall only be offered when doing so will not endanger the children's health or safety. With respect to children who are in substitute care pursuant to the Juvenile Court Act of 1987, family preservation services shall not be offered if a goal other than those of subdivisions (A), (B), or (B-1) of subsection (2.3) of Section 2-28 of that Act has been set, except that reunification services may be offered as provided in paragraph (F) of subsection (2.3) of Section 2-28 of that Act. Nothing in this paragraph shall be construed to create a private right of action or claim on the part of any individual or child welfare agency, except that when a child is the subject of an action under Article II of the Juvenile Court Act of 1987 and the child's service plan calls for services to facilitate achievement of the permanency goal, the court hearing the action under Article II of the Juvenile Court Act of 1987 may order the Department to provide the services set out in the plan, if those services are not provided with reasonable promptness and if those services are available.

The Department shall notify the child and the child's family of the Department's responsibility to offer and provide family preservation services as identified in the service plan. The child and the child's family shall be eligible for services as soon as the report is determined to be "indicated". The Department may offer services to any child or family with respect to whom a report of suspected child abuse

or neglect has been filed, prior to concluding its investigation under Section 7.12 of the Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act. However, the child's or family's willingness to accept services shall not be considered in the investigation. The Department may also provide services to any child or family who is the subject of any report of suspected child abuse or neglect or may refer such child or family to services available from other agencies in the community, even if the report is determined to be unfounded, if the conditions in the child's or family's home are reasonably likely to subject the child or family to future reports of suspected child abuse or neglect. Acceptance of such services shall be voluntary. The Department may also provide services to any child or family after completion of a family assessment, as an alternative to an investigation, as provided under the "differential response program" provided for in subsection (a-5) of Section 7.4 of the Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act.

The Department may, at its discretion except for those children also adjudicated neglected or dependent, accept for care and training any child who has been adjudicated addicted, as a truant minor in need of supervision or as a minor requiring authoritative intervention, under the Juvenile Court Act or the Juvenile Court Act of 1987, but no such child shall be committed to the Department by any court without the approval of the Department. On and after January 1, 2015 (the

effective date of Public Act 98-803) and before January 1, 2017, a minor charged with a criminal offense under the Criminal Code of 1961 or the Criminal Code of 2012 or adjudicated delinquent shall not be placed in the custody of or committed to the Department by any court, except (i) a minor less than 16 years of age committed to the Department under Section 5-710 of the Juvenile Court Act of 1987, (ii) a minor for whom an independent basis of abuse, neglect, or dependency exists, which must be defined by departmental rule, or (iii) a minor for whom the court has granted a supplemental petition to reinstate wardship pursuant to subsection (2) of Section 2-33 of the Juvenile Court Act of 1987. On and after January 1, 2017, a minor charged with a criminal offense under the Criminal Code of 1961 or the Criminal Code of 2012 or adjudicated delinquent shall not be placed in the custody of or committed to the Department by any court, except (i) a minor less than 15 years of age committed to the Department under Section 5-710 of the Juvenile Court Act of 1987, (ii) a minor for whom an independent basis of abuse, neglect, or dependency exists, which must be defined by departmental rule, or (iii) a minor for whom the court has granted a supplemental petition to reinstate wardship pursuant to subsection (2) of Section 2-33 of the Juvenile Court Act of 1987. An independent basis exists when the allegations or adjudication of abuse, neglect, or dependency do not arise from the same facts, incident, or circumstances which give rise to a charge or adjudication of

delinquency. The Department shall assign a caseworker to attend any hearing involving a youth in the care and custody of the Department who is placed on aftercare release, including hearings involving sanctions for violation of aftercare release conditions and aftercare release revocation hearings.

As soon as is possible, the Department shall develop and implement a special program of family preservation services to support intact, relative, foster, and adoptive families who are experiencing extreme hardships due to the difficulty and stress of caring for a child who has been diagnosed with a pervasive developmental disorder if the Department determines that those services are necessary to ensure the health and safety of the child. The Department may offer services to any family whether or not a report has been filed under the Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act. The Department may refer the child or family to services available from other agencies in the community if the conditions in the child's or family's home are reasonably likely to subject the child or family to future reports of suspected child abuse or neglect. Acceptance of these services shall be voluntary. The Department shall develop and implement a public information campaign to alert health and social service providers and the general public about these special family preservation services. The nature and scope of the services offered and the number of families served under the special program implemented under this paragraph shall be determined by the level of funding that the

Department annually allocates for this purpose. The term "pervasive developmental disorder" under this paragraph means a neurological condition, including, but not limited to, Asperger's Syndrome and autism, as defined in the most recent edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders of the American Psychiatric Association.

(1-1) The General Assembly recognizes that the best interests of the child require that the child be placed in the most permanent living arrangement that is an appropriate option for the child, consistent with the child's best interest, using the factors set forth in subsection (4.05) of Section 1-3 of the Juvenile Court Act of 1987 as soon as is practically possible. To achieve this goal, the General Assembly directs the Department of Children and Family Services to conduct concurrent planning so that permanency may occur at the earliest opportunity. Permanent living arrangements may include prevention of placement of a child outside the home of the family when the child can be cared for at home without endangering the child's health or safety; reunification with the family, when safe and appropriate, if temporary placement is necessary; or movement of the child toward the most appropriate living arrangement and legal status.

When determining reasonable efforts to be made with respect to a child, as described in this subsection, and in making such reasonable efforts, the child's health and safety

shall be the paramount concern.

When a child is placed in foster care, the Department shall ensure and document that reasonable efforts were made to prevent or eliminate the need to remove the child from the child's home. The Department must make reasonable efforts to reunify the family when temporary placement of the child occurs unless otherwise required, pursuant to the Juvenile Court Act of 1987. At any time after the dispositional hearing where the Department believes that further reunification services would be ineffective, it may request a finding from the court that reasonable efforts are no longer appropriate. The Department is not required to provide further reunification services after such a finding.

A decision to place a child in substitute care shall be made with considerations of the child's health, safety, and best interests. The Department shall make diligent efforts to place the child with a relative, document those diligent efforts, and document reasons for any failure or inability to secure such a relative placement. If the primary issue preventing an emergency placement of a child with a relative is a lack of resources, including, but not limited to, concrete goods, safety modifications, and services, the Department shall make diligent efforts to assist the relative in obtaining the necessary resources. No later than July 1, 2025, the Department shall adopt rules defining what is diligent and necessary in providing supports to potential

relative placements. At the time of placement, consideration should also be given so that if reunification fails or is delayed, the placement has the potential to be an appropriate permanent placement for the child.

The Department shall adopt rules addressing concurrent planning for reunification and permanency. The Department shall consider the following factors when determining appropriateness of concurrent planning:

- (1) the likelihood of prompt reunification;
- (2) the past history of the family;
- (3) the barriers to reunification being addressed by the family;
- (4) the level of cooperation of the family;
- (4.5) the child's wishes;
- (5) the caregivers' willingness to work with the family to reunite;
- (6) the willingness and ability of the caregivers' to provide a permanent placement;
- (7) the age of the child;
- (8) placement of siblings; and
- (9) the wishes of the parent or parents unless the parental preferences are contrary to the best interests of the child.

(m) The Department may assume temporary custody of any child if:

- (1) it has received a written consent to such

temporary custody signed by the parents of the child or by the parent having custody of the child if the parents are not living together or by the guardian or custodian of the child if the child is not in the custody of either parent, or

(2) the child is found in the State and neither a parent, guardian nor custodian of the child can be located.

If the child is found in the child's residence without a parent, guardian, custodian, or responsible caretaker, the Department may, instead of removing the child and assuming temporary custody, place an authorized representative of the Department in that residence until such time as a parent, guardian, or custodian enters the home and expresses a willingness and apparent ability to ensure the child's health and safety and resume permanent charge of the child, or until a relative enters the home and is willing and able to ensure the child's health and safety and assume charge of the child until a parent, guardian, or custodian enters the home and expresses such willingness and ability to ensure the child's safety and resume permanent charge. After a caretaker has remained in the home for a period not to exceed 12 hours, the Department must follow those procedures outlined in Section 2-9, 3-11, 4-8, or 5-415 of the Juvenile Court Act of 1987.

The Department shall have the authority, responsibilities and duties that a legal custodian of the child would have

pursuant to subsection (9) of Section 1-3 of the Juvenile Court Act of 1987. Whenever a child is taken into temporary custody pursuant to an investigation under the Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act, or pursuant to a referral and acceptance under the Juvenile Court Act of 1987 of a minor in limited custody, the Department, during the period of temporary custody and before the child is brought before a judicial officer as required by Section 2-9, 3-11, 4-8, or 5-415 of the Juvenile Court Act of 1987, shall have the authority, responsibilities and duties that a legal custodian of the child would have under subsection (9) of Section 1-3 of the Juvenile Court Act of 1987.

The Department shall ensure that any child taken into custody is scheduled for an appointment for a medical examination.

A parent, guardian, or custodian of a child in the temporary custody of the Department who would have custody of the child if the child were not in the temporary custody of the Department may deliver to the Department a signed request that the Department surrender the temporary custody of the child. The Department may retain temporary custody of the child for 10 days after the receipt of the request, during which period the Department may cause to be filed a petition pursuant to the Juvenile Court Act of 1987. If a petition is so filed, the Department shall retain temporary custody of the child until the court orders otherwise. If a petition is not filed within

the 10-day period, the child shall be surrendered to the custody of the requesting parent, guardian, or custodian not later than the expiration of the 10-day period, at which time the authority and duties of the Department with respect to the temporary custody of the child shall terminate.

(m-1) The Department may place children under 18 years of age in a secure child care facility licensed by the Department that cares for children who are in need of secure living arrangements for their health, safety, and well-being after a determination is made by the facility director and the Director or the Director's designate prior to admission to the facility subject to Section 2-27.1 of the Juvenile Court Act of 1987. This subsection (m-1) does not apply to a child who is subject to placement in a correctional facility operated pursuant to Section 3-15-2 of the Unified Code of Corrections, unless the child is a youth in care who was placed in the care of the Department before being subject to placement in a correctional facility and a court of competent jurisdiction has ordered placement of the child in a secure care facility.

(n) The Department may place children under 18 years of age in licensed child care facilities when in the opinion of the Department, appropriate services aimed at family preservation have been unsuccessful and cannot ensure the child's health and safety or are unavailable and such placement would be for their best interest. Payment for board, clothing, care, training and supervision of any child placed

in a licensed child care facility may be made by the Department, by the parents or guardians of the estates of those children, or by both the Department and the parents or guardians, except that no payments shall be made by the Department for any child placed in a licensed child care facility for board, clothing, care, training, and supervision of such a child that exceed the average per capita cost of maintaining and of caring for a child in institutions for dependent or neglected children operated by the Department. However, such restriction on payments does not apply in cases where children require specialized care and treatment for problems of severe emotional disturbance, physical disability, social adjustment, or any combination thereof and suitable facilities for the placement of such children are not available at payment rates within the limitations set forth in this Section. All reimbursements for services delivered shall be absolutely inalienable by assignment, sale, attachment, or garnishment or otherwise.

(n-1) The Department shall provide or authorize child welfare services, aimed at assisting minors to achieve sustainable self-sufficiency as independent adults, for any minor eligible for the reinstatement of wardship pursuant to subsection (2) of Section 2-33 of the Juvenile Court Act of 1987, whether or not such reinstatement is sought or allowed, provided that the minor consents to such services and has not yet attained the age of 21. The Department shall have

responsibility for the development and delivery of services under this Section. An eligible youth may access services under this Section through the Department of Children and Family Services or by referral from the Department of Human Services. Youth participating in services under this Section shall cooperate with the assigned case manager in developing an agreement identifying the services to be provided and how the youth will increase skills to achieve self-sufficiency. A homeless shelter is not considered appropriate housing for any youth receiving child welfare services under this Section. The Department shall continue child welfare services under this Section to any eligible minor until the minor becomes 21 years of age, no longer consents to participate, or achieves self-sufficiency as identified in the minor's service plan. The Department of Children and Family Services shall create clear, readable notice of the rights of former foster youth to child welfare services under this Section and how such services may be obtained. The Department of Children and Family Services and the Department of Human Services shall disseminate this information statewide. The Department shall adopt regulations describing services intended to assist minors in achieving sustainable self-sufficiency as independent adults.

(o) The Department shall establish an administrative review and appeal process for children and families who request or receive child welfare services from the Department.

Youth in care who are placed by private child welfare agencies, and caregivers with whom those youth are placed, shall be afforded the same procedural and appeal rights as children and families in the case of placement by the Department, including the right to an initial review of a private agency decision by that agency. The Department shall ensure that any private child welfare agency, which accepts youth in care for placement, affords those rights to children and caregivers with whom those children are placed. The Department shall accept for administrative review and an appeal hearing a complaint made by (i) a child or caregiver with whom the child is placed concerning a decision following an initial review by a private child welfare agency or (ii) a prospective adoptive parent who alleges a violation of subsection (j-5) of this Section. An appeal of a decision concerning a change in the placement of a child shall be conducted in an expedited manner. A court determination that a current placement is necessary and appropriate under Section 2-28 of the Juvenile Court Act of 1987 does not constitute a judicial determination on the merits of an administrative appeal, filed by a former caregiver, involving a change of placement decision. No later than July 1, 2025, the Department shall adopt rules to develop a reconsideration process to review: a denial of certification of a relative, a denial of placement with a relative, and a denial of visitation with an identified relative. Rules shall include standards and

criteria for reconsideration that incorporate the best interests of the child under subsection (4.05) of Section 1-3 of the Juvenile Court Act of 1987, address situations where multiple relatives seek certification, and provide that all rules regarding placement changes shall be followed. The rules shall outline the essential elements of each form used in the implementation and enforcement of the provisions of this amendatory Act of the 103rd General Assembly.

(p) (Blank).

(q) The Department may receive and use, in their entirety, for the benefit of children any gift, donation, or bequest of money or other property which is received on behalf of such children, or any financial benefits to which such children are or may become entitled while under the jurisdiction or care of the Department, except that the benefits described in Section 5.46 must be used and conserved consistent with the provisions under Section 5.46.

The Department shall set up and administer no-cost, interest-bearing accounts in appropriate financial institutions for children for whom the Department is legally responsible and who have been determined eligible for Veterans' Benefits, Social Security benefits, assistance allotments from the armed forces, court ordered payments, parental voluntary payments, Supplemental Security Income, Railroad Retirement payments, Black Lung benefits, or other miscellaneous payments. Interest earned by each account shall

be credited to the account, unless disbursed in accordance with this subsection.

In disbursing funds from children's accounts, the Department shall:

(1) Establish standards in accordance with State and federal laws for disbursing money from children's accounts. In all circumstances, the Department's Guardianship Administrator or the Guardianship Administrator's designee must approve disbursements from children's accounts. The Department shall be responsible for keeping complete records of all disbursements for each account for any purpose.

(2) Calculate on a monthly basis the amounts paid from State funds for the child's board and care, medical care not covered under Medicaid, and social services; and utilize funds from the child's account, as covered by regulation, to reimburse those costs. Monthly, disbursements from all children's accounts, up to 1/12 of \$13,000,000, shall be deposited by the Department into the General Revenue Fund and the balance over 1/12 of \$13,000,000 into the DCFS Children's Services Fund.

(3) Maintain any balance remaining after reimbursing for the child's costs of care, as specified in item (2). The balance shall accumulate in accordance with relevant State and federal laws and shall be disbursed to the child or the child's guardian or to the issuing agency.

(q-5) The Department shall require periodic verification of accounts identified as belonging to or held for the benefit of a youth in care to ensure the preservation of the youth's financial resources.

(q-10)The Department shall adopt rules establishing a process by which a youth, or the youth's parent, guardian, attorney, or guardian ad litem may request an accounting of funds held, conserved, or expended by the Department on behalf of a youth in care and accounts known to the Department under subsection (q-5).

(r) The Department shall promulgate regulations encouraging all adoption agencies to voluntarily forward to the Department or its agent names and addresses of all persons who have applied for and have been approved for adoption of a hard-to-place child or child with a disability and the names of such children who have not been placed for adoption. A list of such names and addresses shall be maintained by the Department or its agent, and coded lists which maintain the confidentiality of the person seeking to adopt the child and of the child shall be made available, without charge, to every adoption agency in the State to assist the agencies in placing such children for adoption. The Department may delegate to an agent its duty to maintain and make available such lists. The Department shall ensure that such agent maintains the confidentiality of the person seeking to adopt the child and of the child.

(s) The Department of Children and Family Services may establish and implement a program to reimburse caregivers licensed, certified, or otherwise approved by the Department of Children and Family Services for damages sustained by the caregivers as a result of the malicious or negligent acts of children placed by the Department, as well as providing third party coverage for such caregivers with regard to actions of children placed by the Department to other individuals. Such coverage will be secondary to the caregiver's liability insurance policy, if applicable. The program shall be funded through appropriations from the General Revenue Fund, specifically designated for such purposes.

(t) The Department shall perform home studies and investigations and shall exercise supervision over visitation as ordered by a court pursuant to the Illinois Marriage and Dissolution of Marriage Act or the Adoption Act only if:

(1) an order entered by an Illinois court specifically directs the Department to perform such services; and

(2) the court has ordered one or both of the parties to the proceeding to reimburse the Department for its reasonable costs for providing such services in accordance with Department rules, or has determined that neither party is financially able to pay.

The Department shall provide written notification to the court of the specific arrangements for supervised visitation and projected monthly costs within 60 days of the court order.

The Department shall send to the court information related to the costs incurred except in cases where the court has determined the parties are financially unable to pay. The court may order additional periodic reports as appropriate.

(u) In addition to other information that must be provided, whenever the Department places a child with a prospective adoptive parent or parents, in a licensed foster home, group home, or child care institution, in a relative home, or in a certified relative caregiver home, the Department shall provide to the caregiver, appropriate facility staff, or prospective adoptive parent or parents:

(1) available detailed information concerning the child's educational and health history, copies of immunization records (including insurance and medical card information), a history of the child's previous placements, if any, and reasons for placement changes excluding any information that identifies or reveals the location of any previous caregiver or adoptive parents;

(2) a copy of the child's portion of the client service plan, including any visitation arrangement, and all amendments or revisions to it as related to the child; and

(3) information containing details of the child's individualized education program ~~educational plan~~ when the child is receiving special education services.

The caregiver, appropriate facility staff, or prospective

adoptive parent or parents, shall be informed of any known social or behavioral information (including, but not limited to, criminal background, fire setting, perpetuation of sexual abuse, destructive behavior, and substance abuse) necessary to care for and safeguard the children to be placed or currently in the home or setting. The Department may prepare a written summary of the information required by this paragraph, which may be provided to the caregiver, appropriate facility staff, or prospective adoptive parent in advance of a placement. The caregiver, appropriate facility staff, or prospective adoptive parent may review the supporting documents in the child's file in the presence of casework staff. In the case of an emergency placement, casework staff shall at least provide known information verbally, if necessary, and must subsequently provide the information in writing as required by this subsection.

The information described in this subsection shall be provided in writing. In the case of emergency placements when time does not allow prior review, preparation, and collection of written information, the Department shall provide such information as it becomes available. Within 10 business days after placement, the Department shall obtain from the caregiver, appropriate facility staff, or prospective adoptive parent or parents a signed verification of receipt of the information provided. Within 10 business days after placement, the Department shall provide to the child's guardian ad litem

a copy of the information provided to the caregiver, appropriate facility staff, or prospective adoptive parent or parents. The information provided to the caregiver, appropriate facility staff, or prospective adoptive parent or parents shall be reviewed and approved regarding accuracy at the supervisory level.

(u-5) Beginning July 1, 2025, certified relative caregiver homes under Section 3.4 of the Child Care Act of 1969 shall be eligible to receive foster care maintenance payments from the Department in an amount no less than payments made to licensed foster family homes. Beginning July 1, 2025, relative homes providing care to a child placed by the Department that are not a certified relative caregiver home under Section 3.4 of the Child Care Act of 1969 or a licensed foster family home shall be eligible to receive payments from the Department in an amount no less 90% of the payments made to licensed foster family homes and certified relative caregiver homes.

(u-6) To assist relative and certified relative caregivers, no later than July 1, 2025, the Department shall adopt rules to implement a relative support program, as follows:

(1) For relative and certified relative caregivers, the Department is authorized to reimburse or prepay reasonable expenditures to remedy home conditions necessary to fulfill the home safety-related requirements of relative caregiver homes.

(2) The Department may provide short-term emergency funds to relative and certified relative caregiver homes experiencing extreme hardships due to the difficulty and stress associated with adding youth in care as new household members.

(3) Consistent with federal law, the Department shall include in any State Plan made in accordance with the Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act of 1980, Titles IV-E and XIX of the Social Security Act, and any other applicable federal laws the provision of kinship navigator program services. The Department shall apply for and administer all relevant federal aid in accordance with law. Federal funds acquired for the kinship navigator program shall be used for the development, implementation, and operation of kinship navigator program services. The kinship navigator program services may provide information, referral services, support, and assistance to relative and certified relative caregivers of youth in care to address their unique needs and challenges. Until the Department is approved to receive federal funds for these purposes, the Department shall publicly post on the Department's website semi-annual updates regarding the Department's progress in pursuing federal funding. Whenever the Department publicly posts these updates on its website, the Department shall notify the General Assembly through the General Assembly's designee.

(u-7) To support finding permanency for children through subsidized guardianship and adoption and to prevent disruption in guardianship and adoptive placements, the Department shall establish and maintain accessible subsidized guardianship and adoption support services for all children under 18 years of age placed in guardianship or adoption who, immediately preceding the guardianship or adoption, were in the custody or guardianship of the Department under Article II of the Juvenile Court Act of 1987.

The Department shall establish and maintain a toll-free number to respond to requests from the public about its subsidized guardianship and adoption support services under this subsection and shall staff the toll-free number so that calls are answered on a timely basis, but in no event more than one business day after the receipt of a request. These requests from the public may be made anonymously. To meet this obligation, the Department may utilize the same toll-free number the Department operates to respond to post-adoption requests under subsection (b-5) of Section 18.9 of the Adoption Act. The Department shall publicize information about the Department's subsidized guardianship support services and toll-free number as follows:

- (1) it shall post information on the Department's website;

- (2) it shall provide the information to every licensed child welfare agency and any entity providing subsidized

guardianship support services in Illinois courts;

(3) it shall reference such information in the materials the Department provides to caregivers pursuing subsidized guardianship to inform them of their rights and responsibilities under the Child Care Act of 1969 and this Act;

(4) it shall provide the information, including the Department's Post Adoption and Guardianship Services booklet, to eligible caregivers as part of its guardianship training and at the time they are presented with the Permanency Commitment form;

(5) it shall include, in each annual notification letter mailed to subsidized guardians, a short, 2-sided flier or news bulletin in plain language that describes access to post-guardianship services, how to access services under the Family Support Program, formerly known as the Individual Care Grant Program, the webpage address to the Post Adoption and Guardianship Services booklet, information on how to request that a copy of the booklet be mailed; and

(6) it shall ensure that kinship navigator programs of this State, when established, have this information to include in materials the programs provide to caregivers.

No later than July 1, 2026, the Department shall provide a mechanism for the public to make information requests by electronic means.

The Department shall review and update annually all information relating to its subsidized guardianship support services, including its Post Adoption and Guardianship Services booklet, to include updated information on Family Support Program services eligibility and subsidized guardianship support services that are available through the medical assistance program established under Article V of the Illinois Public Aid Code or any other State program for mental health services. The Department and the Department of Healthcare and Family Services shall coordinate their efforts in the development of these resources.

Every licensed child welfare agency and any entity providing kinship navigator programs funded by the Department shall provide the Department's website address and link to the Department's subsidized guardianship support services information set forth in subsection (d), including the Department's toll-free number, to every relative who is or will be providing guardianship placement for a child placed by the Department.

(v) The Department shall access criminal history record information as defined in the Illinois Uniform Conviction Information Act and information maintained in the adjudicatory and dispositional record system as defined in Section 2605-355 of the Illinois State Police Law if the Department determines the information is necessary to perform its duties under the Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act, the Child Care Act

of 1969, and the Children and Family Services Act. The Department shall provide for interactive computerized communication and processing equipment that permits direct online ~~on-line~~ communication with the Illinois State Police's central criminal history data repository. The Department shall comply with all certification requirements and provide certified operators who have been trained by personnel from the Illinois State Police. In addition, one Office of the Inspector General investigator shall have training in the use of the criminal history information access system and have access to the terminal. The Department of Children and Family Services and its employees shall abide by rules and regulations established by the Illinois State Police relating to the access and dissemination of this information.

(v-1) Prior to final approval for placement of a child with a foster or adoptive parent, the Department shall conduct a criminal records background check of the prospective foster or adoptive parent, including fingerprint-based checks of national crime information databases. Final approval for placement shall not be granted if the record check reveals a felony conviction for child abuse or neglect, for spousal abuse, for a crime against children, or for a crime involving violence, including human trafficking, sex trafficking, rape, sexual assault, or homicide, but not including other physical assault or battery, or if there is a felony conviction for physical assault, battery, or a drug-related offense committed

within the past 5 years.

(v-2) Prior to final approval for placement of a child with a foster or adoptive parent, the Department shall check its child abuse and neglect registry for information concerning prospective foster and adoptive parents, and any adult living in the home. If any prospective foster or adoptive parent or other adult living in the home has resided in another state in the preceding 5 years, the Department shall request a check of that other state's child abuse and neglect registry.

(v-3) Prior to the final approval of final placement of a related child in a certified relative caregiver home as defined in Section 2.37 of the Child Care Act of 1969, the Department shall ensure that the background screening meets the standards required under subsection (c) of Section 3.4 of the Child Care Act of 1969.

(v-4) Prior to final approval for placement of a child with a relative, as defined in Section 4d of this Act, who is not a licensed foster parent, has declined to seek approval to be a certified relative caregiver, or was denied approval as a certified relative caregiver, the Department shall:

(i) check the child abuse and neglect registry for information concerning the prospective relative caregiver and any other adult living in the home. If any prospective relative caregiver or other adult living in the home has resided in another state in the preceding 5 years, the

Department shall request a check of that other state's child abuse and neglect registry; and

(ii) conduct a criminal records background check of the prospective relative caregiver and all other adults living in the home, including fingerprint-based checks of national crime information databases. Final approval for placement shall not be granted if the record check reveals a felony conviction for child abuse or neglect, for spousal abuse, for a crime against children, or for a crime involving violence, including human trafficking, sex trafficking, rape, sexual assault, or homicide, but not including other physical assault or battery, or if there is a felony conviction for physical assault, battery, or a drug-related offense committed within the past 5 years; provided however, that the Department is empowered to grant a waiver as the Department may provide by rule, and the Department approves the request for the waiver based on a comprehensive evaluation of the caregiver and household members and the conditions relating to the safety of the placement.

No later than July 1, 2025, the Department shall adopt rules or revise existing rules to effectuate the changes made to this subsection (v-4). The rules shall outline the essential elements of each form used in the implementation and enforcement of the provisions of this amendatory Act of the 103rd General Assembly.

(w) (Blank).

(x) The Department shall conduct annual credit history checks to determine the financial history of children placed under its guardianship pursuant to the Juvenile Court Act of 1987. The Department shall conduct such credit checks starting when a youth in care turns 12 years old and each year thereafter for the duration of the guardianship as terminated pursuant to the Juvenile Court Act of 1987. The Department shall determine if financial exploitation of the child's personal information has occurred. If financial exploitation appears to have taken place or is presently ongoing, the Department shall notify the proper law enforcement agency, the proper State's Attorney, or the Attorney General.

(y) Beginning on July 22, 2010 (the effective date of Public Act 96-1189), a child with a disability who receives residential and educational services from the Department shall be eligible to receive transition services in accordance with Article 14 of the School Code from the age of 14.5 through age 21, inclusive, notwithstanding the child's residential services arrangement. For purposes of this subsection, "child with a disability" means a child with a disability as defined by the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004.

(z) The Department shall access criminal history record information as defined as "background information" in this subsection and criminal history record information as defined

in the Illinois Uniform Conviction Information Act for each Department employee or Department applicant. Each Department employee or Department applicant shall submit the employee's or applicant's fingerprints to the Illinois State Police in the form and manner prescribed by the Illinois State Police. These fingerprints shall be checked against the fingerprint records now and hereafter filed in the Illinois State Police and the Federal Bureau of Investigation criminal history records databases. The Illinois State Police shall charge a fee for conducting the criminal history record check, which shall be deposited into the State Police Services Fund and shall not exceed the actual cost of the record check. The Illinois State Police shall furnish, pursuant to positive identification, all Illinois conviction information to the Department of Children and Family Services.

For purposes of this subsection:

"Background information" means all of the following:

(i) Upon the request of the Department of Children and Family Services, conviction information obtained from the Illinois State Police as a result of a fingerprint-based criminal history records check of the Illinois criminal history records database and the Federal Bureau of Investigation criminal history records database concerning a Department employee or Department applicant.

(ii) Information obtained by the Department of Children and Family Services after performing a check of

the Illinois State Police's Sex Offender Database, as authorized by Section 120 of the Sex Offender Community Notification Law, concerning a Department employee or Department applicant.

(iii) Information obtained by the Department of Children and Family Services after performing a check of the Child Abuse and Neglect Tracking System (CANTS) operated and maintained by the Department.

"Department employee" means a full-time or temporary employee coded or certified within the State of Illinois Personnel System.

"Department applicant" means an individual who has conditional Department full-time or part-time work, a contractor, an individual used to replace or supplement staff, an academic intern, a volunteer in Department offices or on Department contracts, a work-study student, an individual or entity licensed by the Department, or an unlicensed service provider who works as a condition of a contract or an agreement and whose work may bring the unlicensed service provider into contact with Department clients or client records.

(aa) The changes made to this Section by Public Act 104-165 ~~this amendatory Act of the 104th General Assembly~~ are declarative of existing law and are not a new enactment.

(Source: P.A. 103-22, eff. 8-8-23; 103-50, eff. 1-1-24; 103-546, eff. 8-11-23; 103-605, eff. 7-1-24; 103-1061, eff. 7-1-25; 104-107, eff. 7-1-26; 104-165, eff. 8-15-25; revised

9-11-25.)

(20 ILCS 505/35.10)

(Text of Section before amendment by P.A. 104-107)

Sec. 35.10. Documents necessary for adult living. The Department shall assist a youth in care in identifying and obtaining documents necessary to function as an independent adult prior to the closure of the youth's case to terminate wardship as provided in Section 2-31 of the Juvenile Court Act of 1987. These necessary documents shall include, but not be limited to, any of the following:

- (1) State identification card or driver's license.
- (2) Social Security card.
- (3) Medical records, including, but not limited to, health passport, dental records, immunization records, name and contact information for all current medical, dental, and mental health providers, and a signed certification that the Department provided the youth with education on executing a healthcare power of attorney.
- (4) Medicaid card or other health eligibility documentation.
- (5) Certified copy of birth certificate.
- (6) Any applicable religious documents.
- (7) Voter registration card.
- (8) Immigration, citizenship, or naturalization documentation, if applicable.

(9) Death certificates of parents, if applicable.

(10) Life book or compilation of personal history and photographs.

(11) List of known relatives with relationships, addresses, telephone numbers, and other contact information, with the permission of the involved relative.

(12) Resume.

(13) Educational records, including list of schools attended, and transcript, high school diploma, or State of Illinois High School Diploma.

(14) List of placements while in care.

(15) List of community resources with referral information, including the Midwest Adoption Center for search and reunion services for former youth in care, whether or not they were adopted, and the Illinois Chapter of Foster Care Alumni of America.

(16) All documents necessary to complete a Free Application for Federal Student Aid form, if applicable, or an application for State financial aid.

(17) If applicable, a final accounting of the account maintained on behalf of the youth as provided under Section 5.46.

If a court determines that a youth in care no longer requires wardship of the court and orders the wardship terminated and all proceedings under the Juvenile Court Act of 1987 respecting the youth in care finally closed and discharged,

the Department shall ensure that the youth in care receives a copy of the court's order.

(Source: P.A. 102-70, eff. 1-1-22; 102-1014, eff. 5-27-22; 102-1100, eff. 1-1-23; 103-154, eff. 6-30-23; revised 12-12-25.)

(Text of Section after amendment by P.A. 104-107)

Sec. 35.10. Successful transitions to and documents necessary for adult living.

(a) The Department shall make reasonable efforts to develop, in partnership with the youth, an age and developmentally appropriate individualized youth-driven transition plan for each youth in care aged 15 and over to help such youth develop and strengthen those life skills that lead to successful adult living and that reflects the youth's age, developmental needs, lived experiences, strengths, and aspirations. As applicable, based on the youth's ~~minor's~~ age and developmental appropriateness, the youth-driven transition plan shall address the following areas:

- (1) assessment and development of life skills;
- (2) education;
- (3) post high school goals and career planning;
- (4) driver's education;
- (5) participation in extracurricular activities;
- (6) internships and apprenticeships;
- (7) employment;

- (8) housing;
- (9) mental and physical health and well-being;
- (10) the youth's financial stability, including developmentally appropriate financial literacy education and information regarding any financial accounts established in the youth's name or for the youth's benefit of which the Department is aware ~~financial stability~~;
- (11) connections to supportive adults and peers;
- (12) transition to adult services;
- (13) documents necessary for adult living as provided in subsection (b), and information regarding the process by which such documents may be obtained; and
- (14) child care ~~childcare~~ and parenting supports.

The Department shall include the youth-driven transition plan in the youth's service plan. The Department shall make reasonable efforts to assist the youth in accomplishing the plan, to develop strategies to resolve barriers, and to ensure the youth is aware of any post-case closure supports and services and how to access such supports and services.

(b) The Department shall assist a youth in care in identifying and obtaining documents necessary to function as an independent adult prior to the closure of the youth's case to terminate wardship as provided in Section 2-31 of the Juvenile Court Act of 1987. These necessary documents shall include, but not be limited to, any of the following:

- (1) State identification card or driver's license.

(2) Social Security card.

(3) Medical records, including, but not limited to, health passport, dental records, immunization records, name and contact information for all current medical, dental, and mental health providers, and a signed certification that the Department provided the youth with education on executing a healthcare power of attorney.

(4) Medicaid card or other health eligibility documentation.

(5) Certified copy of birth certificate.

(6) Any applicable religious documents.

(7) Voter registration card.

(8) Immigration, citizenship, or naturalization documentation, if applicable.

(9) Death certificates of parents, if applicable.

(10) Life book or compilation of personal history and photographs.

(11) List of known relatives and persons willing to provide supports to the youth with relationships, addresses, telephone numbers, and other contact information, with the permission of the involved relative or supportive person.

(12) Resume.

(13) Educational records, including list of schools attended, and transcript, high school diploma, or State of Illinois High School Diploma.

(14) List of placements while in care.

(15) List of community resources with referral information, including Family Advocacy Centers, the Midwest Adoption Center for search and reunion services for former youth in care, whether or not they were adopted, and the Illinois Chapter of Foster Care Alumni of America.

(16) All documents necessary to complete a Free Application for Federal Student Aid form, if applicable, or an application for State financial aid.

(17) If applicable, a final accounting of the account maintained on behalf of the youth as provided under Section 5.46.

(18) Documentation related to financial accounts established in the youth in care's name or for the youth's benefit.

(c) To ensure meaningful youth engagement in Successful Transition to Adulthood Review (STAR) hearings, established under Section 2-28.2 of the Juvenile Court Act of 1987, the Department shall make reasonable efforts to:

(1) ensure that each youth in care who is eligible for a STAR hearing is informed of court hearings concerning his or her case at least 10 days in advance of the hearing whenever practicable, and is afforded the opportunity to attend or participate in the STAR hearing; and

(2) support each youth in care's attendance in the

youth's STAR hearings, including by providing or arranging transportation or other appropriate accommodations consistent with the youth's age and developmental needs.

If a court determines that a youth in care no longer requires wardship of the court and orders the wardship terminated and all proceedings under the Juvenile Court Act of 1987 respecting the youth in care finally closed and discharged, the Department shall ensure that the youth in care receives a copy of the court's order.

(Source: P.A. 103-154, eff. 6-30-23; 104-107, eff. 7-1-26; revised 12-12-25.)

Section 7. The Department of Children and Family Services Statewide Youth Advisory Board Act is amended by changing Sections 5 and 15 as follows:

(20 ILCS 527/5)

Sec. 5. Statewide Youth Advisory Board; regional youth advisory boards. The Department of Children and Family Services shall convene and maintain a Statewide Youth Advisory Board and regional youth advisory boards. Each regional youth advisory board shall work with the Department or its designee to determine how to best provide services to current and former youth in foster care living within each of the regions. The Statewide Youth Advisory Board shall advise the Department and the General Assembly with respect to all matters involving

or affecting current and former youth in foster care. Responsibilities of the Statewide Youth Advisory Board shall include:

(1) providing the Department and the General Assembly with the perspective of youth under the care of the Department;

(2) identifying, analyzing, and recommending solutions to any issues concerning adoption and guardianship and youth in foster care;

(3) reviewing and advising the Department on proposed or pending legislation, primarily as it concerns current and former youth in foster care; and

(4) reviewing and making recommendations on Department foster care and child welfare service delivery policies, guidelines, procedures, rulemaking, and training.

(Source: P.A. 98-806, eff. 1-1-15.)

(20 ILCS 527/15)

Sec. 15. Meetings.

(a) Regular meetings of the regional youth advisory boards shall be held monthly.

(b) Regular meetings of the Statewide Youth Advisory Board shall be held at least 5 times per year.

(c) The Director of the Department or the Director's designee shall meet with the Statewide Youth Advisory Board at least quarterly in order to discuss the issues and concerns of

youth in foster care. The Director or the Director's designee shall affirmatively engage with the Statewide Youth Advisory Board regarding proposed or newly implemented Department policies, guidelines, procedures, rules, and training that materially affect current or former youth in foster care and shall provide the Board a reasonable opportunity to review and offer input when practicable.

(d) All meetings shall take place at locations, dates, and times determined by the Department or its designee in accordance with the bylaws for the Statewide Youth Advisory Board and the regional youth advisory boards.

(Source: P.A. 103-22, eff. 8-8-23.)

Section 10. The Juvenile Court Act of 1987 is amended by changing Sections 2-28 and 2-28.2 as follows:

(705 ILCS 405/2-28)

(Text of Section before amendment by P.A. 104-107)

Sec. 2-28. Court review.

(1) The court may require any legal custodian or guardian of the person appointed under this Act to report periodically to the court or may cite the legal custodian or guardian into court and require the legal custodian, guardian, or the legal custodian's or guardian's agency to make a full and accurate report of the doings of the legal custodian, guardian, or agency on behalf of the minor. The custodian or guardian,

within 10 days after such citation, or earlier if the court determines it to be necessary to protect the health, safety, or welfare of the minor, shall make the report, either in writing verified by affidavit or orally under oath in open court, or otherwise as the court directs. Upon the hearing of the report the court may remove the custodian or guardian and appoint another in the custodian's or guardian's stead or restore the minor to the custody of the minor's parents or former guardian or custodian. However, custody of the minor shall not be restored to any parent, guardian, or legal custodian in any case in which the minor is found to be neglected or abused under Section 2-3 or dependent under Section 2-4 of this Act, unless the minor can be cared for at home without endangering the minor's health or safety and it is in the best interests of the minor, and if such neglect, abuse, or dependency is found by the court under paragraph (1) of Section 2-21 of this Act to have come about due to the acts or omissions or both of such parent, guardian, or legal custodian, until such time as an investigation is made as provided in paragraph (5) and a hearing is held on the issue of the fitness of such parent, guardian, or legal custodian to care for the minor and the court enters an order that such parent, guardian, or legal custodian is fit to care for the minor.

(1.5) The public agency that is the custodian or guardian of the minor shall file a written report with the court no

later than 15 days after a minor in the agency's care remains:

- (1) in a shelter placement beyond 30 days;
- (2) in a psychiatric hospital past the time when the minor is clinically ready for discharge or beyond medical necessity for the minor's health; or
- (3) in a detention center or Department of Juvenile Justice facility solely because the public agency cannot find an appropriate placement for the minor.

The report shall explain the steps the agency is taking to ensure the minor is placed appropriately, how the minor's needs are being met in the minor's shelter placement, and if a future placement has been identified by the Department, why the anticipated placement is appropriate for the needs of the minor and the anticipated placement date.

(1.6) Within 30 days after placing a child in its care in a qualified residential treatment program, as defined by the federal Social Security Act, the Department of Children and Family Services shall prepare a written report for filing with the court and send copies of the report to all parties. Within 20 days of the filing of the report, or as soon thereafter as the court's schedule allows but not more than 60 days from the date of placement, the court shall hold a hearing to consider the Department's report and determine whether placement of the child in a qualified residential treatment program provides the most effective and appropriate level of care for the child in the least restrictive environment and if the placement is

consistent with the short-term and long-term goals for the child, as specified in the permanency plan for the child. The court shall approve or disapprove the placement. If applicable, the requirements of Sections 2-27.1 and 2-27.2 must also be met. The Department's written report and the court's written determination shall be included in and made part of the case plan for the child. If the child remains placed in a qualified residential treatment program, the Department shall submit evidence at each status and permanency hearing:

(A) demonstrating that ongoing ~~on-going~~ assessment of the strengths and needs of the child continues to support the determination that the child's needs cannot be met through placement in a foster family home, that the placement provides the most effective and appropriate level of care for the child in the least restrictive, appropriate environment, and that the placement is consistent with the short-term and long-term permanency goal for the child, as specified in the permanency plan for the child;

(B) documenting the specific treatment or service needs that should be met for the child in the placement and the length of time the child is expected to need the treatment or services;

(C) the efforts made by the agency to prepare the child to return home or to be placed with a fit and willing

relative, a legal guardian, or an adoptive parent, or in a foster family home; and

(D) beginning July 1, 2025, documenting the Department's efforts regarding ongoing family finding and relative engagement required under Section 2-27.3.

(2) The first permanency hearing shall be conducted by the judge. Subsequent permanency hearings may be heard by a judge or by hearing officers appointed or approved by the court in the manner set forth in Section 2-28.1 of this Act. The initial hearing shall be held (a) within 12 months from the date temporary custody was taken, regardless of whether an adjudication or dispositional hearing has been completed within that time frame, (b) if the parental rights of both parents have been terminated in accordance with the procedure described in subsection (5) of Section 2-21, within 30 days of the order for termination of parental rights and appointment of a guardian with power to consent to adoption, or (c) in accordance with subsection (2) of Section 2-13.1. Subsequent permanency hearings shall be held every 6 months or more frequently if necessary in the court's determination following the initial permanency hearing, in accordance with the standards set forth in this Section, until the court determines that the plan and goal have been achieved. Once the plan and goal have been achieved, if the minor remains in substitute care, the case shall be reviewed at least every 6 months thereafter, subject to the provisions of this Section,

unless the minor is placed in the guardianship of a suitable relative or other person and the court determines that further monitoring by the court does not further the health, safety, or best interest of the child and that this is a stable permanent placement. The permanency hearings must occur within the time frames set forth in this subsection and may not be delayed in anticipation of a report from any source or due to the agency's failure to timely file its written report (this written report means the one required under the next paragraph and does not mean the service plan also referred to in that paragraph).

The public agency that is the custodian or guardian of the minor, or another agency responsible for the minor's care, shall ensure that all parties to the permanency hearings are provided a copy of the most recent service plan prepared within the prior 6 months at least 14 days in advance of the hearing. If not contained in the agency's service plan, the agency shall also include a report setting forth the following:

(A) any special physical, psychological, educational, medical, emotional, or other needs of the minor or the minor's family that are relevant to a permanency or placement determination, and for any minor age 16 or over, a written description of the programs and services that will enable the minor to prepare for independent living;

(B) beginning July 1, 2025, a written description of

ongoing family finding and relative engagement efforts in accordance with the requirements under Section 2-27.3 the agency has undertaken since the most recent report to the court to plan for the emotional and legal permanency of the minor;

(C) whether a minor is placed in a licensed child care facility under a corrective plan by the Department due to concerns impacting the minor's safety and well-being. The report shall explain the steps the Department is taking to ensure the safety and well-being of the minor and that the minor's needs are met in the facility;

(D) detail regarding what progress or lack of progress the parent has made in correcting the conditions requiring the child to be in care; whether the child can be returned home without jeopardizing the child's health, safety, and welfare, what permanency goal is recommended to be in the best interests of the child, and the reasons for the recommendation. If a permanency goal under paragraph (A), (B), or (B-1) of subsection (2.3) have been deemed inappropriate and not in the minor's best interest, the report must include the following information:

(i) confirmation that the caseworker has discussed the permanency options and subsidies available for guardianship and adoption with the minor's caregivers, the minor's parents, as appropriate, and has discussed the available permanency options with the minor in an

age-appropriate manner;

(ii) confirmation that the caseworker has discussed with the minor's caregivers, the minor's parents, as appropriate, and the minor as age-appropriate, the distinctions between guardianship and adoption, including, but not limited to, that guardianship does not require termination of the parent's rights or the consent of the parent;

(iii) a description of the stated preferences and concerns, if any, the minor, the parent as appropriate, and the caregiver expressed relating to the options of guardianship and adoption, and the reasons for the preferences;

(iv) if the minor is not currently in a placement that will provide permanency, identification of all persons presently willing and able to provide permanency to the minor through either guardianship or adoption, and beginning July 1, 2025, if none are available, a description of the efforts made in accordance with Section 2-27.3; and

(v) state the recommended permanency goal, why that goal is recommended, and why the other potential goals were not recommended.

The caseworker must appear and testify at the permanency hearing. If a permanency hearing has not previously been scheduled by the court, the moving party shall move for the

setting of a permanency hearing and the entry of an order within the time frames set forth in this subsection.

(2.3) At the permanency hearing, the court shall determine the permanency goal of the child. The court shall set one of the following permanency goals:

(A) The minor will be returned home by a specific date within 5 months.

(B) The minor will be in short-term care with a continued goal to return home within a period not to exceed one year, where the progress of the parent or parents is substantial giving particular consideration to the age and individual needs of the minor.

(B-1) The minor will be in short-term care with a continued goal to return home pending a status hearing. When the court finds that a parent has not made reasonable efforts or reasonable progress to date, the court shall identify what actions the parent and the Department must take in order to justify a finding of reasonable efforts or reasonable progress and shall set a status hearing to be held not earlier than 9 months from the date of adjudication nor later than 11 months from the date of adjudication during which the parent's progress will again be reviewed.

If the court has determined that goals (A), (B), and (B-1) are not appropriate and not in the minor's best interest, the court may select one of the following goals:

(C), (D), (E), (F), (G), or (H) for the minor as appropriate and based on the best interests of the minor. The court shall determine the appropriate goal for the minor based on best interest factors and any considerations outlined in that goal.

(C) The guardianship of the minor shall be transferred to an individual or couple on a permanent basis. Prior to changing the goal to guardianship, the court shall consider the following:

(i) whether the agency has discussed adoption and guardianship with the caregiver and what preference, if any, the caregiver has as to the permanency goal;

(ii) whether the agency has discussed adoption and guardianship with the minor, as age-appropriate, and what preference, if any, the minor has as to the permanency goal;

(iii) whether the minor is of sufficient age to remember the minor's parents and if the child values this familial identity;

(iv) whether the minor is placed with a relative, and beginning July 1, 2025, whether the minor is placed in a relative home as defined in Section 4d of the Children and Family Services Act or in a certified relative caregiver home as defined in Section 2.36 of the Child Care Act of 1969; and

(v) whether the parent or parents have been

informed about guardianship and adoption, and, if appropriate, what preferences, if any, the parent or parents have as to the permanency goal.

(D) The minor will be in substitute care pending court determination on termination of parental rights. Prior to changing the goal to substitute care pending court determination on termination of parental rights, the court shall consider the following:

(i) whether the agency has discussed adoption and guardianship with the caregiver and what preference, if any, the caregiver has as to the permanency goal;

(ii) whether the agency has discussed adoption and guardianship with the minor, as age-appropriate, and what preference, if any, the minor has as to the permanency goal;

(iii) whether the minor is of sufficient age to remember the minor's parents and if the child values this familial identity;

(iv) whether the minor is placed with a relative, and beginning July 1, 2025, whether the minor is placed in a relative home as defined in Section 4d of the Children and Family Services Act, in a certified relative caregiver home as defined in Section 2.36 of the Child Care Act of 1969;

(v) whether the minor is already placed in a pre-adoptive home, and if not, whether such a home has

been identified; and

(vi) whether the parent or parents have been informed about guardianship and adoption, and, if appropriate, what preferences, if any, the parent or parents have as to the permanency goal.

(E) Adoption, provided that parental rights have been terminated or relinquished.

(F) Provided that permanency goals (A) through (E) have been deemed inappropriate and not in the minor's best interests, the minor over age 15 will be in substitute care pending independence. In selecting this permanency goal, the Department of Children and Family Services may provide services to enable reunification and to strengthen the minor's connections with family, fictive kin, and other responsible adults, provided the services are in the minor's best interest. The services shall be documented in the service plan.

(G) The minor will be in substitute care because the minor cannot be provided for in a home environment due to developmental disabilities or mental illness or because the minor is a danger to self or others, provided that goals (A) through (E) have been deemed inappropriate and not in the child's best interests.

In selecting any permanency goal, the court shall indicate in writing the reasons the goal was selected and why the preceding goals were deemed inappropriate and not in the

child's best interest. Where the court has selected a permanency goal other than (A), (B), or (B-1), the Department of Children and Family Services shall not provide further reunification services, except as provided in paragraph (F) of this subsection (2.3), but shall provide services consistent with the goal selected.

(H) Notwithstanding any other provision in this Section, the court may select the goal of continuing foster care as a permanency goal if:

(1) The Department of Children and Family Services has custody and guardianship of the minor;

(2) The court has deemed all other permanency goals inappropriate based on the child's best interest;

(3) The court has found compelling reasons, based on written documentation reviewed by the court, to place the minor in continuing foster care. Compelling reasons include:

(a) the child does not wish to be adopted or to be placed in the guardianship of the minor's relative, certified relative caregiver, or foster care placement;

(b) the child exhibits an extreme level of need such that the removal of the child from the minor's placement would be detrimental to the child; or

(c) the child who is the subject of the permanency hearing has existing close and strong bonds with a sibling, and achievement of another permanency goal would substantially interfere with the subject child's sibling relationship, taking into consideration the nature and extent of the relationship, and whether ongoing contact is in the subject child's best interest, including long-term emotional interest, as compared with the legal and emotional benefit of permanence;

(4) The child has lived with the relative, certified relative caregiver, or foster parent for at least one year; and

(5) The relative, certified relative caregiver, or foster parent currently caring for the child is willing and capable of providing the child with a stable and permanent environment.

(2.4) The court shall set a permanency goal that is in the best interest of the child. In determining that goal, the court shall consult with the minor in an age-appropriate manner regarding the proposed permanency or transition plan for the minor. The court's determination shall include the following factors:

(A) Age of the child.

(B) Options available for permanence, including both out-of-state and in-state placement options.

(C) Current placement of the child and the intent of the family regarding subsidized guardianship and adoption.

(D) Emotional, physical, and mental status or condition of the child.

(E) Types of services previously offered and whether or not the services were successful and, if not successful, the reasons the services failed.

(F) Availability of services currently needed and whether the services exist.

(G) Status of siblings of the minor.

(H) If the minor is not currently in a placement likely to achieve permanency, whether there is an identified and willing potential permanent caregiver for the minor, and if so, that potential permanent caregiver's intent regarding guardianship and adoption.

The court shall consider (i) the permanency goal contained in the service plan, (ii) the appropriateness of the services contained in the plan and whether those services have been provided, (iii) whether reasonable efforts have been made by all the parties to the service plan to achieve the goal, and (iv) whether the plan and goal have been achieved. All evidence relevant to determining these questions, including oral and written reports, may be admitted and may be relied on to the extent of their probative value.

The court shall make findings as to whether, in violation of Section 8.2 of the Abused and Neglected Child Reporting

Act, any portion of the service plan compels a child or parent to engage in any activity or refrain from any activity that is not reasonably related to remedying a condition or conditions that gave rise or which could give rise to any finding of child abuse or neglect. The services contained in the service plan shall include services reasonably related to remedy the conditions that gave rise to removal of the child from the home of the child's parents, guardian, or legal custodian or that the court has found must be remedied prior to returning the child home. Any tasks the court requires of the parents, guardian, or legal custodian or child prior to returning the child home must be reasonably related to remedying a condition or conditions that gave rise to or which could give rise to any finding of child abuse or neglect.

If the permanency goal is to return home, the court shall make findings that identify any problems that are causing continued placement of the children away from the home and identify what outcomes would be considered a resolution to these problems. The court shall explain to the parents that these findings are based on the information that the court has at that time and may be revised, should additional evidence be presented to the court.

The court shall review the Sibling Contact Support Plan developed or modified under subsection (f) of Section 7.4 of the Children and Family Services Act, if applicable. If the Department has not convened a meeting to develop or modify a

Sibling Contact Support Plan, or if the court finds that the existing Plan is not in the child's best interest, the court may enter an order requiring the Department to develop, modify, or implement a Sibling Contact Support Plan, or order mediation.

Beginning July 1, 2025, the court shall review the Ongoing Family Finding and Relative Engagement Plan required under Section 2-27.3. If the court finds that the plan is not in the minor's best interest, the court shall enter specific factual findings and order the Department to modify the plan consistent with the court's findings.

If the goal has been achieved, the court shall enter orders that are necessary to conform the minor's legal custody and status to those findings.

If, after receiving evidence, the court determines that the services contained in the plan are not reasonably calculated to facilitate achievement of the permanency goal, the court shall put in writing the factual basis supporting the determination and enter specific findings based on the evidence. The court also shall enter an order for the Department to develop and implement a new service plan or to implement changes to the current service plan consistent with the court's findings. The new service plan shall be filed with the court and served on all parties within 45 days of the date of the order. The court shall continue the matter until the new service plan is filed. Except as authorized by subsection

(2.5) of this Section and as otherwise specifically authorized by law, the court is not empowered under this Section to order specific placements, specific services, or specific service providers to be included in the service plan.

A guardian or custodian appointed by the court pursuant to this Act shall file updated case plans with the court every 6 months.

Rights of wards of the court under this Act are enforceable against any public agency by complaints for relief by mandamus filed in any proceedings brought under this Act.

(2.5) If, after reviewing the evidence, including evidence from the Department, the court determines that the minor's current or planned placement is not necessary or appropriate to facilitate achievement of the permanency goal, the court shall put in writing the factual basis supporting its determination and enter specific findings based on the evidence. If the court finds that the minor's current or planned placement is not necessary or appropriate, the court may enter an order directing the Department to implement a recommendation by the minor's treating clinician or a clinician contracted by the Department to evaluate the minor or a recommendation made by the Department. If the Department places a minor in a placement under an order entered under this subsection (2.5), the Department has the authority to remove the minor from that placement when a change in circumstances necessitates the removal to protect the minor's health,

safety, and best interest. If the Department determines removal is necessary, the Department shall notify the parties of the planned placement change in writing no later than 10 days prior to the implementation of its determination unless remaining in the placement poses an imminent risk of harm to the minor, in which case the Department shall notify the parties of the placement change in writing immediately following the implementation of its decision. The Department shall notify others of the decision to change the minor's placement as required by Department rule.

(3) Following the permanency hearing, the court shall enter a written order that includes the determinations required under subsections (2) and (2.3) of this Section and sets forth the following:

(a) The future status of the minor, including the permanency goal, and any order necessary to conform the minor's legal custody and status to such determination; or

(b) If the permanency goal of the minor cannot be achieved immediately, the specific reasons for continuing the minor in the care of the Department of Children and Family Services or other agency for short-term placement, and the following determinations:

(i) (Blank).

(ii) Whether the services required by the court and by any service plan prepared within the prior 6 months have been provided and (A) if so, whether the

services were reasonably calculated to facilitate the achievement of the permanency goal or (B) if not provided, why the services were not provided.

(iii) Whether the minor's current or planned placement is necessary, and appropriate to the plan and goal, recognizing the right of minors to the least restrictive (most family-like) setting available and in close proximity to the parents' home consistent with the health, safety, best interest, and special needs of the minor and, if the minor is placed out-of-state, whether the out-of-state placement continues to be appropriate and consistent with the health, safety, and best interest of the minor.

(iv) (Blank).

(v) (Blank).

(4) The minor or any person interested in the minor may apply to the court for a change in custody of the minor and the appointment of a new custodian or guardian of the person or for the restoration of the minor to the custody of the minor's parents or former guardian or custodian.

When return home is not selected as the permanency goal:

(a) The Department, the minor, or the current foster parent or relative caregiver seeking private guardianship may file a motion for private guardianship of the minor. Appointment of a guardian under this Section requires approval of the court.

(b) The State's Attorney may file a motion to terminate parental rights of any parent who has failed to make reasonable efforts to correct the conditions which led to the removal of the child or reasonable progress toward the return of the child, as defined in subdivision (D) (m) of Section 1 of the Adoption Act or for whom any other unfitness ground for terminating parental rights as defined in subdivision (D) of Section 1 of the Adoption Act exists.

When parental rights have been terminated for a minimum of 3 years and the child who is the subject of the permanency hearing is 13 years old or older and is not currently placed in a placement likely to achieve permanency, the Department of Children and Family Services shall make reasonable efforts to locate parents whose rights have been terminated, except when the Court determines that those efforts would be futile or inconsistent with the subject child's best interests. The Department of Children and Family Services shall assess the appropriateness of the parent whose rights have been terminated, and shall, as appropriate, foster and support connections between the parent whose rights have been terminated and the youth. The Department of Children and Family Services shall document its determinations and efforts to foster connections in the child's case plan. Custody of the minor shall not be restored to any parent,

guardian, or legal custodian in any case in which the minor is found to be neglected or abused under Section 2-3 or dependent under Section 2-4 of this Act, unless the minor can be cared for at home without endangering the minor's health or safety and it is in the best interest of the minor, and if such neglect, abuse, or dependency is found by the court under paragraph (1) of Section 2-21 of this Act to have come about due to the acts or omissions or both of such parent, guardian, or legal custodian, until such time as an investigation is made as provided in paragraph (5) and a hearing is held on the issue of the health, safety, and best interest of the minor and the fitness of such parent, guardian, or legal custodian to care for the minor and the court enters an order that such parent, guardian, or legal custodian is fit to care for the minor. If a motion is filed to modify or vacate a private guardianship order and return the child to a parent, guardian, or legal custodian, the court may order the Department of Children and Family Services to assess the minor's current and proposed living arrangements and to provide ongoing monitoring of the health, safety, and best interest of the minor during the pendency of the motion to assist the court in making that determination. In the event that the minor has attained 18 years of age and the guardian or custodian petitions the court for an order terminating the minor's guardianship or custody, guardianship or custody shall terminate automatically 30 days after the receipt of the petition unless the court orders

otherwise. No legal custodian or guardian of the person may be removed without the legal custodian's or guardian's consent until given notice and an opportunity to be heard by the court.

When the court orders a child restored to the custody of the parent or parents, the court shall order the parent or parents to cooperate with the Department of Children and Family Services and comply with the terms of an aftercare ~~after-care~~ plan, or risk the loss of custody of the child and possible termination of their parental rights. The court may also enter an order of protective supervision in accordance with Section 2-24.

If the minor is being restored to the custody of a parent, legal custodian, or guardian who lives outside of Illinois, and an Interstate Compact has been requested and refused, the court may order the Department of Children and Family Services to arrange for an assessment of the minor's proposed living arrangement and for ongoing monitoring of the health, safety, and best interest of the minor and compliance with any order of protective supervision entered in accordance with Section 2-24.

(5) Whenever a parent, guardian, or legal custodian files a motion for restoration of custody of the minor, and the minor was adjudicated neglected, abused, or dependent as a result of physical abuse, the court shall cause to be made an investigation as to whether the movant has ever been charged with or convicted of any criminal offense which would indicate

the likelihood of any further physical abuse to the minor. Evidence of such criminal convictions shall be taken into account in determining whether the minor can be cared for at home without endangering the minor's health or safety and fitness of the parent, guardian, or legal custodian.

(a) Any agency of this State or any subdivision thereof shall cooperate with the agent of the court in providing any information sought in the investigation.

(b) The information derived from the investigation and any conclusions or recommendations derived from the information shall be provided to the parent, guardian, or legal custodian seeking restoration of custody prior to the hearing on fitness and the movant shall have an opportunity at the hearing to refute the information or contest its significance.

(c) All information obtained from any investigation shall be confidential as provided in Section 5-150 of this Act.

(Source: P.A. 103-22, eff. 8-8-23; 103-154, eff. 6-30-23; 103-171, eff. 1-1-24; 103-605, eff. 7-1-24; 103-1061, eff. 2-5-25; 104-2, eff. 6-16-25; revised 8-20-25.)

(Text of Section after amendment by P.A. 104-107)

Sec. 2-28. Court review.

(1) The court may require any legal custodian or guardian of the person appointed under this Act to report periodically

to the court or may cite the legal custodian or guardian into court and require the legal custodian, guardian, or the legal custodian's or guardian's agency to make a full and accurate report of the doings of the legal custodian, guardian, or agency on behalf of the minor. The custodian or guardian, within 10 days after such citation, or earlier if the court determines it to be necessary to protect the health, safety, or welfare of the minor, shall make the report, either in writing verified by affidavit or orally under oath in open court, or otherwise as the court directs. Upon the hearing of the report the court may remove the custodian or guardian and appoint another in the custodian's or guardian's stead or restore the minor to the custody of the minor's parents or former guardian or custodian. However, custody of the minor shall not be restored to any parent, guardian, or legal custodian in any case in which the minor is found to be neglected or abused under Section 2-3 or dependent under Section 2-4 of this Act, unless the minor can be cared for at home without endangering the minor's health or safety and it is in the best interests of the minor, and if such neglect, abuse, or dependency is found by the court under paragraph (1) of Section 2-21 of this Act to have come about due to the acts or omissions or both of such parent, guardian, or legal custodian, until such time as an investigation is made as provided in paragraph (5) and a hearing is held on the issue of the fitness of such parent, guardian, or legal custodian to

care for the minor and the court enters an order that such parent, guardian, or legal custodian is fit to care for the minor.

(1.5) The public agency that is the custodian or guardian of the minor shall file a written report with the court no later than 15 days after a minor in the agency's care remains:

(1) in a shelter placement beyond 30 days;

(2) in a psychiatric hospital past the time when the minor is clinically ready for discharge or beyond medical necessity for the minor's health; or

(3) in a detention center or Department of Juvenile Justice facility solely because the public agency cannot find an appropriate placement for the minor.

The report shall explain the steps the agency is taking to ensure the minor is placed appropriately, how the minor's needs are being met in the minor's shelter placement, and if a future placement has been identified by the Department, why the anticipated placement is appropriate for the needs of the minor and the anticipated placement date.

(1.6) Within 30 days after placing a child in its care in a qualified residential treatment program, as defined by the federal Social Security Act, the Department of Children and Family Services shall prepare a written report for filing with the court and send copies of the report to all parties. Within 20 days of the filing of the report, or as soon thereafter as the court's schedule allows but not more than 60 days from the

date of placement, the court shall hold a hearing to consider the Department's report and determine whether placement of the child in a qualified residential treatment program provides the most effective and appropriate level of care for the child in the least restrictive environment and if the placement is consistent with the short-term and long-term goals for the child, as specified in the permanency plan for the child. The court shall approve or disapprove the placement. If applicable, the requirements of Sections 2-27.1 and 2-27.2 must also be met. The Department's written report and the court's written determination shall be included in and made part of the case plan for the child. If the child remains placed in a qualified residential treatment program, the Department shall submit evidence at each status and permanency hearing:

(A) demonstrating that ongoing ~~on-going~~ assessment of the strengths and needs of the child continues to support the determination that the child's needs cannot be met through placement in a foster family home, that the placement provides the most effective and appropriate level of care for the child in the least restrictive, appropriate environment, and that the placement is consistent with the short-term and long-term permanency goal for the child, as specified in the permanency plan for the child;

(B) documenting the specific treatment or service

needs that should be met for the child in the placement and the length of time the child is expected to need the treatment or services;

(C) detailing the efforts made by the agency to prepare the child to return home or to be placed with a fit and willing relative, a legal guardian, or an adoptive parent, or in a foster family home; and

(D) beginning July 1, 2025, documenting the Department's efforts regarding ongoing family finding and relative engagement required under Section 2-27.3, ~~and~~

~~(E) detailing efforts to ensure the minor is engaged in age and developmentally appropriate activities to develop life skills, which may include extracurricular activities, coaching by caregivers, or instruction in individual or group settings. For minors who have participated in life skills assessments, the results of such assessments and how the minor's identified needs are being addressed.~~

(2) The first permanency hearing shall be conducted by the judge. Subsequent permanency hearings may be heard by a judge or by hearing officers appointed or approved by the court in the manner set forth in Section 2-28.1 of this Act. The initial hearing shall be held (a) within 12 months from the date temporary custody was taken, regardless of whether an adjudication or dispositional hearing has been completed within that time frame, (b) if the parental rights of both

parents have been terminated in accordance with the procedure described in subsection (5) of Section 2-21, within 30 days of the order for termination of parental rights and appointment of a guardian with power to consent to adoption, or (c) in accordance with subsection (2) of Section 2-13.1. Subsequent permanency hearings shall be held every 6 months or more frequently if necessary in the court's determination following the initial permanency hearing, in accordance with the standards set forth in this Section, until the court determines that the plan and goal have been achieved. Once the plan and goal have been achieved, if the minor remains in substitute care, the case shall be reviewed at least every 6 months thereafter, subject to the provisions of this Section, unless the minor is placed in the guardianship of a suitable relative or other person and the court determines that further monitoring by the court does not further the health, safety, or best interest of the child and that this is a stable permanent placement. The permanency hearings must occur within the time frames set forth in this subsection and may not be delayed in anticipation of a report from any source or due to the agency's failure to timely file its written report (this written report means the one required under the next paragraph and does not mean the service plan also referred to in that paragraph).

The public agency that is the custodian or guardian of the minor, or another agency responsible for the minor's care,

shall ensure that all parties to the permanency hearings are provided a copy of the most recent service plan prepared within the prior 6 months at least 14 days in advance of the hearing. If not contained in the agency's service plan, the agency shall also include a report setting forth the following:

(A) any special physical, psychological, educational, medical, emotional, or other needs of the minor or the minor's family that are relevant to a permanency or placement determination, and for any minor age 16 or over, a written description of the programs and services that will enable the minor to prepare for independent living;

(B) beginning July 1, 2025, a written description of ongoing family finding and relative engagement efforts in accordance with the requirements under Section 2-27.3 the agency has undertaken since the most recent report to the court to plan for the emotional and legal permanency of the minor;

(C) whether a minor is placed in a licensed child care facility under a corrective plan by the Department due to concerns impacting the minor's safety and well-being. The report shall explain the steps the Department is taking to ensure the safety and well-being of the minor and that the minor's needs are met in the facility;

(D) detail regarding what progress or lack of progress the parent has made in correcting the conditions requiring

the child to be in care; whether the child can be returned home without jeopardizing the child's health, safety, and welfare, what permanency goal is recommended to be in the best interests of the child, and the reasons for the recommendation. If a permanency goal under paragraph (A), (B), or (B-1) of subsection (2.3) have been deemed inappropriate and not in the minor's best interest, the report must include the following information:

- (i) confirmation that the caseworker has discussed the permanency options and subsidies available for guardianship and adoption with the minor's caregivers, the minor's parents, as appropriate, and has discussed the available permanency options with the minor in an age-appropriate manner;

- (ii) confirmation that the caseworker has discussed with the minor's caregivers, the minor's parents, as appropriate, and the minor as age-appropriate, the distinctions between guardianship and adoption, including, but not limited to, that guardianship does not require termination of the parent's rights or the consent of the parent;

- (iii) a description of the stated preferences and concerns, if any, the minor, the parent as appropriate, and the caregiver expressed relating to the options of guardianship and adoption, and the reasons for the preferences;

(iv) if the minor is not currently in a placement that will provide permanency, identification of all persons presently willing and able to provide permanency to the minor through either guardianship or adoption, and beginning July 1, 2025, if none are available, a description of the efforts made in accordance with Section 2-27.3; and

(v) state the recommended permanency goal, why that goal is recommended, and why the other potential goals were not recommended; and -

(E) detail efforts to ensure the minor is engaged in age and developmentally appropriate activities to develop life skills, which may include extracurricular activities, coaching by caregivers, or instruction in individual or group settings. For minors who have participated in life skills assessments, the results of such assessments and how the minor's identified needs are being addressed.

The caseworker must appear and testify at the permanency hearing. If a permanency hearing has not previously been scheduled by the court, the moving party shall move for the setting of a permanency hearing and the entry of an order within the time frames set forth in this subsection.

(2.3) At the permanency hearing, the court shall determine the permanency goal of the child. The court shall set one of the following permanency goals:

(A) The minor will be returned home by a specific date

within 5 months.

(B) The minor will be in short-term care with a continued goal to return home within a period not to exceed one year, where the progress of the parent or parents is substantial giving particular consideration to the age and individual needs of the minor.

(B-1) The minor will be in short-term care with a continued goal to return home pending a status hearing. When the court finds that a parent has not made reasonable efforts or reasonable progress to date, the court shall identify what actions the parent and the Department must take in order to justify a finding of reasonable efforts or reasonable progress and shall set a status hearing to be held not earlier than 9 months from the date of adjudication nor later than 11 months from the date of adjudication during which the parent's progress will again be reviewed.

If the court has determined that goals (A), (B), and (B-1) are not appropriate and not in the minor's best interest, the court may select one of the following goals: (C), (D), (E), (F), (G), or (H) for the minor as appropriate and based on the best interests of the minor. The court shall determine the appropriate goal for the minor based on best interest factors and any considerations outlined in that goal.

(C) The guardianship of the minor shall be transferred

to an individual or couple on a permanent basis. Prior to changing the goal to guardianship, the court shall consider the following:

(i) whether the agency has discussed adoption and guardianship with the caregiver and what preference, if any, the caregiver has as to the permanency goal;

(ii) whether the agency has discussed adoption and guardianship with the minor, as age-appropriate, and what preference, if any, the minor has as to the permanency goal;

(iii) whether the minor is of sufficient age to remember the minor's parents and if the child values this familial identity;

(iv) whether the minor is placed with a relative, and beginning July 1, 2025, whether the minor is placed in a relative home as defined in Section 4d of the Children and Family Services Act or in a certified relative caregiver home as defined in Section 2.36 of the Child Care Act of 1969; and

(v) whether the parent or parents have been informed about guardianship and adoption, and, if appropriate, what preferences, if any, the parent or parents have as to the permanency goal.

(D) The minor will be in substitute care pending court determination on termination of parental rights. Prior to changing the goal to substitute care pending court

determination on termination of parental rights, the court shall consider the following:

(i) whether the agency has discussed adoption and guardianship with the caregiver and what preference, if any, the caregiver has as to the permanency goal;

(ii) whether the agency has discussed adoption and guardianship with the minor, as age-appropriate, and what preference, if any, the minor has as to the permanency goal;

(iii) whether the minor is of sufficient age to remember the minor's parents and if the child values this familial identity;

(iv) whether the minor is placed with a relative, and beginning July 1, 2025, whether the minor is placed in a relative home as defined in Section 4d of the Children and Family Services Act, in a certified relative caregiver home as defined in Section 2.36 of the Child Care Act of 1969;

(v) whether the minor is already placed in a pre-adoptive home, and if not, whether such a home has been identified; and

(vi) whether the parent or parents have been informed about guardianship and adoption, and, if appropriate, what preferences, if any, the parent or parents have as to the permanency goal.

(E) Adoption, provided that parental rights have been

terminated or relinquished.

(F) Provided that permanency goals (A) through (E) have been deemed inappropriate and not in the minor's best interests, the minor over age 15 will be in substitute care pending independence. In selecting this permanency goal, the Department of Children and Family Services may provide services to enable reunification and to strengthen the minor's connections with family, fictive kin, and other responsible adults, provided the services are in the minor's best interest. The services shall be documented in the service plan.

(G) The minor will be in substitute care because the minor cannot be provided for in a home environment due to developmental disabilities or mental illness or because the minor is a danger to self or others, provided that goals (A) through (E) have been deemed inappropriate and not in the child's best interests.

In selecting any permanency goal, the court shall indicate in writing the reasons the goal was selected and why the preceding goals were deemed inappropriate and not in the child's best interest. Where the court has selected a permanency goal other than (A), (B), or (B-1), the Department of Children and Family Services shall not provide further reunification services, except as provided in paragraph (F) of this subsection (2.3), but shall provide services consistent with the goal selected.

(H) Notwithstanding any other provision in this Section, the court may select the goal of continuing foster care as a permanency goal if:

(1) The Department of Children and Family Services has custody and guardianship of the minor;

(2) The court has deemed all other permanency goals inappropriate based on the child's best interest;

(3) The court has found compelling reasons, based on written documentation reviewed by the court, to place the minor in continuing foster care. Compelling reasons include:

(a) the child does not wish to be adopted or to be placed in the guardianship of the minor's relative, certified relative caregiver, or foster care placement;

(b) the child exhibits an extreme level of need such that the removal of the child from the minor's placement would be detrimental to the child; or

(c) the child who is the subject of the permanency hearing has existing close and strong bonds with a sibling, and achievement of another permanency goal would substantially interfere with the subject child's sibling relationship, taking into consideration the nature and extent of the

relationship, and whether ongoing contact is in the subject child's best interest, including long-term emotional interest, as compared with the legal and emotional benefit of permanence;

(4) The child has lived with the relative, certified relative caregiver, or foster parent for at least one year; and

(5) The relative, certified relative caregiver, or foster parent currently caring for the child is willing and capable of providing the child with a stable and permanent environment.

(2.4) The court shall set a permanency goal that is in the best interest of the child. In determining that goal, the court shall consult with the minor in an age-appropriate manner regarding the proposed permanency or transition plan for the minor. The court's determination shall include the following factors:

(A) Age of the child.

(B) Options available for permanence, including both out-of-state and in-state placement options.

(C) Current placement of the child and the intent of the family regarding subsidized guardianship and adoption.

(D) Emotional, physical, and mental status or condition of the child.

(E) Types of services previously offered and whether or not the services were successful and, if not

successful, the reasons the services failed.

(F) Availability of services currently needed and whether the services exist.

(G) Status of siblings of the minor.

(H) If the minor is not currently in a placement likely to achieve permanency, whether there is an identified and willing potential permanent caregiver for the minor, and if so, that potential permanent caregiver's intent regarding guardianship and adoption.

The court shall consider (i) the permanency goal contained in the service plan, (ii) the appropriateness of the services contained in the plan and whether those services have been provided, (iii) whether reasonable efforts have been made by all the parties to the service plan to achieve the goal, and (iv) whether the plan and goal have been achieved. All evidence relevant to determining these questions, including oral and written reports, may be admitted and may be relied on to the extent of their probative value.

The court shall make findings as to whether, in violation of Section 8.2 of the Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act, any portion of the service plan compels a child or parent to engage in any activity or refrain from any activity that is not reasonably related to remedying a condition or conditions that gave rise or which could give rise to any finding of child abuse or neglect. The services contained in the service plan shall include services reasonably related to remedy the

conditions that gave rise to removal of the child from the home of the child's parents, guardian, or legal custodian or that the court has found must be remedied prior to returning the child home. Any tasks the court requires of the parents, guardian, or legal custodian or child prior to returning the child home must be reasonably related to remedying a condition or conditions that gave rise to or which could give rise to any finding of child abuse or neglect.

If the permanency goal is to return home, the court shall make findings that identify any problems that are causing continued placement of the children away from the home and identify what outcomes would be considered a resolution to these problems. The court shall explain to the parents that these findings are based on the information that the court has at that time and may be revised, should additional evidence be presented to the court.

The court shall review the Sibling Contact Support Plan developed or modified under subsection (f) of Section 7.4 of the Children and Family Services Act, if applicable. If the Department has not convened a meeting to develop or modify a Sibling Contact Support Plan, or if the court finds that the existing Plan is not in the child's best interest, the court may enter an order requiring the Department to develop, modify, or implement a Sibling Contact Support Plan, or order mediation.

The court shall review the Department's efforts to provide

the minor with age and developmentally appropriate life skills. If the court finds the Department's efforts are not in the minor's best interest, the court may enter an order requiring the Department to develop, modify, or implement the service plan to develop the minor's life skills in an age and developmentally appropriate manner.

Beginning July 1, 2025, the court shall review the Ongoing Family Finding and Relative Engagement Plan required under Section 2-27.3. If the court finds that the plan is not in the minor's best interest, the court shall enter specific factual findings and order the Department to modify the plan consistent with the court's findings.

If the goal has been achieved, the court shall enter orders that are necessary to conform the minor's legal custody and status to those findings.

If, after receiving evidence, the court determines that the services contained in the plan are not reasonably calculated to facilitate achievement of the permanency goal, the court shall put in writing the factual basis supporting the determination and enter specific findings based on the evidence. The court also shall enter an order for the Department to develop and implement a new service plan or to implement changes to the current service plan consistent with the court's findings. The new service plan shall be filed with the court and served on all parties within 45 days of the date of the order. The court shall continue the matter until the new

service plan is filed. Except as authorized by subsection (2.5) of this Section and as otherwise specifically authorized by law, the court is not empowered under this Section to order specific placements, specific services, or specific service providers to be included in the service plan.

A guardian or custodian appointed by the court pursuant to this Act shall file updated case plans with the court every 6 months.

Rights of wards of the court under this Act are enforceable against any public agency by complaints for relief by mandamus filed in any proceedings brought under this Act.

(2.5) If, after reviewing the evidence, including evidence from the Department, the court determines that the minor's current or planned placement is not necessary or appropriate to facilitate achievement of the permanency goal, the court shall put in writing the factual basis supporting its determination and enter specific findings based on the evidence. If the court finds that the minor's current or planned placement is not necessary or appropriate, the court may enter an order directing the Department to implement a recommendation by the minor's treating clinician or a clinician contracted by the Department to evaluate the minor or a recommendation made by the Department. If the Department places a minor in a placement under an order entered under this subsection (2.5), the Department has the authority to remove the minor from that placement when a change in circumstances

necessitates the removal to protect the minor's health, safety, and best interest. If the Department determines removal is necessary, the Department shall notify the parties of the planned placement change in writing no later than 10 days prior to the implementation of its determination unless remaining in the placement poses an imminent risk of harm to the minor, in which case the Department shall notify the parties of the placement change in writing immediately following the implementation of its decision. The Department shall notify others of the decision to change the minor's placement as required by Department rule.

(3) Following the permanency hearing, the court shall enter a written order that includes the determinations required under subsections (2) and (2.3) of this Section and sets forth the following:

(a) The future status of the minor, including the permanency goal, and any order necessary to conform the minor's legal custody and status to such determination; or

(b) If the permanency goal of the minor cannot be achieved immediately, the specific reasons for continuing the minor in the care of the Department of Children and Family Services or other agency for short-term placement, and the following determinations:

(i) (Blank).

(ii) Whether the services required by the court and by any service plan prepared within the prior 6

months have been provided and (A) if so, whether the services were reasonably calculated to facilitate the achievement of the permanency goal or (B) if not provided, why the services were not provided.

(iii) Whether the minor's current or planned placement is necessary, and appropriate to the plan and goal, recognizing the right of minors to the least restrictive (most family-like) setting available and in close proximity to the parents' home consistent with the health, safety, best interest, and special needs of the minor and, if the minor is placed out-of-state, whether the out-of-state placement continues to be appropriate and consistent with the health, safety, and best interest of the minor.

(iv) (Blank).

(v) (Blank).

If the court sets a permanency goal of independence or if the minor is 17 years of age or older, the court shall schedule a Successful Transition to Adulthood Review hearing in accordance with Section 2-28.2.

(4) The minor or any person interested in the minor may apply to the court for a change in custody of the minor and the appointment of a new custodian or guardian of the person or for the restoration of the minor to the custody of the minor's parents or former guardian or custodian.

When return home is not selected as the permanency goal:

(a) The Department, the minor, or the current foster parent or relative caregiver seeking private guardianship may file a motion for private guardianship of the minor. Appointment of a guardian under this Section requires approval of the court.

(b) The State's Attorney may file a motion to terminate parental rights of any parent who has failed to make reasonable efforts to correct the conditions which led to the removal of the child or reasonable progress toward the return of the child, as defined in subdivision (D)(m) of Section 1 of the Adoption Act or for whom any other unfitness ground for terminating parental rights as defined in subdivision (D) of Section 1 of the Adoption Act exists.

When parental rights have been terminated for a minimum of 3 years and the child who is the subject of the permanency hearing is 13 years old or older and is not currently placed in a placement likely to achieve permanency, the Department of Children and Family Services shall make reasonable efforts to locate parents whose rights have been terminated, except when the Court determines that those efforts would be futile or inconsistent with the subject child's best interests. The Department of Children and Family Services shall assess the appropriateness of the parent whose rights have been terminated, and shall, as appropriate, foster and support

connections between the parent whose rights have been terminated and the minor ~~youth~~. The Department of Children and Family Services shall document its determinations and efforts to foster connections in the child's case plan.

Custody of the minor shall not be restored to any parent, guardian, or legal custodian in any case in which the minor is found to be neglected or abused under Section 2-3 or dependent under Section 2-4 of this Act, unless the minor can be cared for at home without endangering the minor's health or safety and it is in the best interest of the minor, and if such neglect, abuse, or dependency is found by the court under paragraph (1) of Section 2-21 of this Act to have come about due to the acts or omissions or both of such parent, guardian, or legal custodian, until such time as an investigation is made as provided in paragraph (5) and a hearing is held on the issue of the health, safety, and best interest of the minor and the fitness of such parent, guardian, or legal custodian to care for the minor and the court enters an order that such parent, guardian, or legal custodian is fit to care for the minor. If a motion is filed to modify or vacate a private guardianship order and return the child to a parent, guardian, or legal custodian, the court may order the Department of Children and Family Services to assess the minor's current and proposed living arrangements and to provide ongoing monitoring of the health, safety, and best interest of the minor during the pendency of the motion to assist the court in making that

determination. In the event that the minor has attained 18 years of age and the guardian or custodian petitions the court for an order terminating the minor's guardianship or custody, guardianship or custody shall terminate automatically 30 days after the receipt of the petition unless the court orders otherwise. No legal custodian or guardian of the person may be removed without the legal custodian's or guardian's consent until given notice and an opportunity to be heard by the court.

When the court orders a child restored to the custody of the parent or parents, the court shall order the parent or parents to cooperate with the Department of Children and Family Services and comply with the terms of an aftercare ~~after-care~~ plan, or risk the loss of custody of the child and possible termination of their parental rights. The court may also enter an order of protective supervision in accordance with Section 2-24.

If the minor is being restored to the custody of a parent, legal custodian, or guardian who lives outside of Illinois, and an Interstate Compact has been requested and refused, the court may order the Department of Children and Family Services to arrange for an assessment of the minor's proposed living arrangement and for ongoing monitoring of the health, safety, and best interest of the minor and compliance with any order of protective supervision entered in accordance with Section 2-24.

(5) Whenever a parent, guardian, or legal custodian files

a motion for restoration of custody of the minor, and the minor was adjudicated neglected, abused, or dependent as a result of physical abuse, the court shall cause to be made an investigation as to whether the movant has ever been charged with or convicted of any criminal offense which would indicate the likelihood of any further physical abuse to the minor. Evidence of such criminal convictions shall be taken into account in determining whether the minor can be cared for at home without endangering the minor's health or safety and fitness of the parent, guardian, or legal custodian.

(a) Any agency of this State or any subdivision thereof shall cooperate with the agent of the court in providing any information sought in the investigation.

(b) The information derived from the investigation and any conclusions or recommendations derived from the information shall be provided to the parent, guardian, or legal custodian seeking restoration of custody prior to the hearing on fitness and the movant shall have an opportunity at the hearing to refute the information or contest its significance.

(c) All information obtained from any investigation shall be confidential as provided in Section 5-150 of this Act.

(Source: P.A. 103-22, eff. 8-8-23; 103-154, eff. 6-30-23; 103-171, eff. 1-1-24; 103-605, eff. 7-1-24; 103-1061, eff. 2-5-25; 104-2, eff. 6-16-25; 104-107, eff. 7-1-26; revised

8-20-25.)

(705 ILCS 405/2-28.2)

(This Section may contain text from a Public Act with a delayed effective date)

Sec. 2-28.2. Successful Transition to Adulthood Review hearings.

(a) The court shall conduct Successful Transition to Adulthood Review (STAR) hearings to review the Department's efforts to ensure the minor is provided with opportunities to engage in individualized future-focused planning towards adulthood, to develop age-appropriate daily living skills to live successfully as an adult, and if applicable, to be prepared to transition out of the care of the Department at age 21.

(b) The court shall conduct a STAR hearing for all minors for whom the court has entered a permanency goal of independence and for all minors who are 17 years of age or older. The minor's first STAR hearing shall be conducted within 6 months of the minor qualifying for a STAR hearing. Subsequent STAR hearings may be conducted contemporaneously with the minor's permanency hearing. At a minimum, the court shall conduct STAR hearings for eligible minors within 6 months of the minor becoming eligible for a STAR hearing and annually thereafter. The court may schedule additional STAR hearings as necessary and in the minor's best interest, or

upon the request of the minor.

(c) Fourteen days in advance of the STAR hearing the Department shall provide the court with the minor's ~~youth's~~ service plan that includes the following information:

(1) a copy of the youth-driven transition plan developed in accordance with Section 35.10 of the Children and Family Services Act;

(2) for minors ~~youth~~ 17 years of age and older, the ILO TLP Quarterly Discharge Launch Plan, if applicable;

(3) a description of the documents necessary for adult living as provided in Section 35.10 of the Children and Family Services Act that the minor has, the documents the minor continues to need, and the Department's plan to ensure the minor has such documents prior to case closure;

(4) a description of the Department's efforts to assist the minor ~~youth~~ in developing and maintaining connections with supportive adults and a copy of the minor's Ongoing Family Finding and Relative Engagement Plan developed in accordance with Section 2-27.3; and

(5) for minors ~~youth~~ who are likely to need a guardian as a person with a disability, in accordance with Article XIa of the Probate Act of 1975, a description of the Department's efforts to obtain any necessary assessments.

(d) At the STAR hearing the court shall:

(1) review the Department's efforts to assist the minor in developing and implementing an individualized

youth-driven transition plan to develop life skills that will lead to successful adult living;

(2) review the plan developed by the Department and the minor to ensure that it is reasonably likely to ensure the minor can live independent of supports from the Department;

(3) review the Department's efforts to assist the minor in accomplishing the plan;

(4) review the Department's efforts to ensure the minor has documents necessary for adult living, as defined in Section 35.10 of the Children and Family Services Act prior to case closure;

(5) review the Department's efforts to ensure that the minor is aware of available supports and services post-case closure and how to access such supports and services; ~~and~~

(6) if applicable, review the Department's efforts to obtain any needed assessments to determine whether the youth may qualify for a guardian as a person with a disability under Article XIa of the Probate Act of 1975; and -

(7) allow the minor the opportunity to express to the court the minor's goals, preferences, and concerns regarding the minor's transition to independence. The court shall give considerable weight to the minor's preferences in determining the minor's best interests.

(e) When scheduling STAR hearings, to the extent reasonable, the court must consider the minor's availability and preferred method of court participation, whether in person or via secure videoconferencing technology, if available and permitted by the court.

(f) If the court finds that the youth-driven transition plan for the minor is not in the minor's best interest or will not be reasonably likely to result in the development of life skills necessary for adult living, the court shall make specific factual findings supporting its findings and order the Department to develop a new plan with the minor consistent with the court's findings. If the court finds that the Department has failed to make reasonable efforts to (i) assist the minor in developing and accomplishing a youth-driven transition plan or (ii) obtain any necessary assessments for minors to determine whether the youth may qualify for a guardian as a person with a disability under Article XIa of the Probate Act of 1975, then the court shall make specific factual findings and may enter such orders it deems necessary to ensure that the minor is developing necessary life skills and, when appropriate, is prepared to successfully transition to adulthood.

(Source: P.A. 104-107, eff. 7-1-26.)

Section 95. No acceleration or delay. Where this Act makes changes in a statute that is represented in this Act by text

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that is not yet or no longer in effect (for example, a Section represented by multiple versions), the use of that text does not accelerate or delay the taking effect of (i) the changes made by this Act or (ii) provisions derived from any other Public Act.

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