

2026 Regular Session

SENATE BILL NO. 462

BY SENATOR MCMATH

CHILDREN. Provides relative to child welfare. (8/1/26)

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AN ACT

To amend and reenact the introductory paragraph of R.S. 46:285(A), 285(A)(2) and (6), (C), (H), and (I) and the introductory paragraph of Children's Code Art. 610(A)(1), the introductory paragraph of Children's Code Art. 610(A)(2), and Children's Code Art. 610(A)(4)(a), (C), and (D), relative to child welfare; to provide for required training for child protection and foster care workers; to provide for child abuse and neglect reporting procedures; and to provide for related matters.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

Section 1. The introductory paragraph of R.S. 46:285(A), 285(A)(2) and (6), (C), (H), and (I) are hereby amended and reenacted to read as follows:

§285. Required training for child protection and foster care workers

A. ~~No **Each**~~ employee of the Department of Children and Family Services, office of children and family services, with direct responsibility for cases dealing with families and children ~~after January 1, 1984, shall exercise responsibility for any cases until that employee has completed~~ **shall complete** a training program consisting of at least thirty-two hours of instruction, addressing ~~such appropriate~~ topics **such** as:

* * *

(2) Legal aspects of child protection and foster care including the legal duties of the representatives, which may consist of various methods of informing ~~such~~ representatives of ~~such~~ duties, in order to protect the constitutional and statutory rights and safety of children and families from the initial time of contact during investigation through treatment.

* * *

(6) Training to ensure that workers are knowledgeable in best practices for promoting collaboration with families and that they are fully aware of the extent and the limits of their legal authority and the legal rights of parents in carrying out ~~such~~ investigations. Training shall include legal duties of workers to protect the constitutional and statutory rights of children and families from the initial time of contact during investigation through treatment.

* * *

C. Any employee hired on or after July 1, 2010, who has graduated from a Council on Social Work Education accredited program of social work certifying that the employee has completed course work and demonstrated competency in the core areas of effective child welfare practice, including successful completion of a child welfare specific internship, ~~shall be deemed~~ **may be considered** to have met the thirty-two hour training requirement specified in Subsection A of this Section and may begin exercising responsibility for cases under agency supervision. The Department of Children and Family Services in partnership with the Louisiana University Child Welfare Workforce Alliance shall define the core competencies, which shall include but not be limited to the competencies set forth in Subsection A of this Section, of effective child welfare practice. The Department of Children and Family Services shall be specifically authorized to promulgate rules and regulations, pursuant to the Administrative Procedure Act, which may be necessary to effect the provisions of this Section.

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1 H. The Department of Children and Family Services shall provide ~~such~~
2 training through its own personnel, partnerships with universities, or by contracting
3 with **qualified** outside persons or agencies.

4 I. The Department of Children and Family Services may continue incentive
5 pay schedules established by the Department of State Civil Service to compensate
6 social work personnel with selected graduate degrees at a higher rate than other
7 persons without ~~such~~ specialized advanced degrees as provided by the Department
8 of State Civil Service and the State Civil Service Commission.

9 * * *

10 Section 2. The introductory paragraph of Children's Code Art. 610(A)(1), the
11 introductory paragraph of Children's Code Art. 610(A)(2), and Children's Code Art.
12 610(A)(4)(a), (C), and (D) are hereby amended and reenacted to read as follows:

13 Art. 610. Reporting procedure; reports to the legislature and the United States
14 Department of Defense Family Advocacy Program

15 A. A reporter shall immediately report suspected child abuse or neglect or
16 that child abuse or neglect was a contributing factor in a child's death in the
17 following ways:

18 (1) To the Department of Children and Family Services if ~~the reporter has~~
19 ~~reason to believe that~~ the perpetrator is any of the following:

20 * * *

21 (2) To a local or state law enforcement agency if ~~the reporter has reason to~~
22 ~~believe that~~ the perpetrator is any of the following:

23 * * *

24 (4) Reports to the department shall be made as follows:

25 (a) A mandatory reporter shall make a report of suspected abuse or neglect
26 requiring immediate assistance via the designated state child protection reporting
27 hotline telephone number. A report of suspected abuse or neglect which is of a
28 nonemergency nature may be reported via the Louisiana Department of Children and
29 Family Services Mandated Reporter Portal online. ~~Reports may also be made in~~

(Amends R.S. 46:285(A)(intro para), 285(A)(2) and (6), (C), (H), and (I) and Ch. C. Art. 610(A)(1)(intro para), 610(A)(2)(intro para), and 610(A)(4)(a), (C), and (D))