

1                   A bill to be entitled  
2           An act relating to independent living; amending s.  
3           39.013, F.S.; providing that when the court obtains  
4           jurisdiction over a child who has been found to be  
5           dependent, the court retains jurisdiction until the  
6           child reaches a certain age; providing exceptions;  
7           amending s. 39.6013, F.S.; conforming a cross-  
8           reference; creating s. 39.6035, F.S.; requiring the  
9           Department of Children and Families, the community-  
10          based care provider, and others to assist a child in  
11          developing a transition plan after the child reaches a  
12          specified age and requiring a meeting to develop the  
13          plan; specifying requirements and procedures for the  
14          transition plan; requiring periodic review of the  
15          transition plan; requiring the court to approve the  
16          transition plan before the child leaves foster care  
17          and the court terminates jurisdiction; creating s.  
18          39.6251, F.S.; providing definitions; providing that a  
19          young adult may remain in foster care under certain  
20          circumstances after attaining 18 years of age;  
21          specifying criteria for extended foster care;  
22          providing that the permanency goal for a young adult  
23          who chooses to remain in care is transition from care  
24          to independent living; specifying dates for  
25          eligibility for a young adult to remain in extended  
26          foster care; providing for supervised living  
27          arrangements in extended foster care; authorizing a  
28          young adult to return to foster care under certain

29 | circumstances; specifying services that must be  
30 | provided to the young adult; directing the court to  
31 | retain jurisdiction and hold review hearings; amending  
32 | s. 39.701, F.S.; revising judicial review of foster  
33 | care cases; making technical changes; providing  
34 | criteria for review hearings for children younger than  
35 | 18 years of age; providing criteria for review  
36 | hearings for children 17 years of age; requiring the  
37 | department to verify that the child has certain  
38 | documents; requiring the department to update the case  
39 | plan; providing for review hearings for young adults  
40 | in foster care; amending s. 409.145, F.S.; requiring  
41 | the department to develop and implement a system of  
42 | care for children in foster care; specifying the goals  
43 | of the foster care system; requiring the department to  
44 | assist foster care caregivers to achieve quality  
45 | parenting; specifying the roles and responsibilities  
46 | of caregivers, the department, and others; providing  
47 | for transition from a caregiver; requiring information  
48 | sharing; providing for the adoption and use of a  
49 | reasonable and prudent parent standard; defining  
50 | terms; providing for the application for the standard  
51 | of care; providing for limiting liability of  
52 | caregivers; specifying foster parent room and board  
53 | rates; authorizing community-based care service  
54 | providers to pay a supplemental monthly room and board  
55 | payment to foster parents for providing certain  
56 | services; directing the department to adopt rules;

57 deleting obsolete provisions; amending s. 409.1451,  
58 F.S.; providing for the Road-to-Independence program;  
59 providing legislative findings and intent; providing  
60 for postsecondary services and support; requiring  
61 former foster care young adults attending a  
62 postsecondary educational institution to have an  
63 assigned mentor; requiring community-based care  
64 service providers to maintain a listing of all  
65 available mentors; specifying aftercare services;  
66 providing for appeals of a determination of  
67 eligibility; providing for portability of services  
68 across county lines and between lead agencies;  
69 providing for accountability; requiring a report to  
70 the Legislature; creating the Independent Living  
71 Services Advisory Council; providing for membership  
72 and specifying the duties and functions of the  
73 council; requiring reports and recommendations;  
74 providing for a young adult to retain personal  
75 property; requiring the department to document  
76 enrollment of eligible young adults in Medicaid;  
77 directing the department to adopt rules; amending s.  
78 409.175, F.S.; allowing young adults remaining in care  
79 to be considered in the total number of children  
80 placed in a foster home; amending s. 409.903, F.S.;  
81 conforming a cross-reference; requiring the department  
82 to acquire postsecondary educational campus coaching  
83 positions for certain purposes; providing for a  
84 network coordinator to provide oversight; providing

85 | for a transfer of services; providing for the cost of  
86 | foster care to be paid from a special category in the  
87 | General Appropriations Act; providing an effective  
88 | date.

89 |

90 | Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

91 |

92 | Section 1. Subsection (2) of section 39.013, Florida  
93 | Statutes, is amended to read:

94 | 39.013 Procedures and jurisdiction; right to counsel.—

95 | (2) The circuit court has exclusive original jurisdiction  
96 | of all proceedings under this chapter, of a child voluntarily  
97 | placed with a licensed child-caring agency, a licensed child-  
98 | placing agency, or the department, and of the adoption of  
99 | children whose parental rights have been terminated under this  
100 | chapter. Jurisdiction attaches when the initial shelter  
101 | petition, dependency petition, or termination of parental rights  
102 | petition, or a petition for an injunction to prevent child abuse  
103 | issued pursuant to s. 39.504, is filed or when a child is taken  
104 | into the custody of the department. The circuit court may assume  
105 | jurisdiction over any such proceeding regardless of whether the  
106 | child was in the physical custody of both parents, was in the  
107 | sole legal or physical custody of only one parent, caregiver, or  
108 | some other person, or was not in the physical or legal custody  
109 | of any person when the event or condition occurred that brought  
110 | the child to the attention of the court. When the court obtains  
111 | jurisdiction of any child who has been found to be dependent,  
112 | the court shall retain jurisdiction, unless relinquished by its

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113 order, until the child reaches 21 ~~18~~ years of age, with the  
114 following exceptions:

115 (a) If a young adult chooses to leave foster care upon  
116 reaching 18 years of age, the court shall relinquish  
117 jurisdiction.

118 (b) If a young adult does not meet the eligibility  
119 requirements to remain in foster care under s. 39.6251, the  
120 court shall relinquish jurisdiction.

121 (c) However, If a young adult ~~youth~~ petitions the court at  
122 any time before his or her 19th birthday requesting the court's  
123 continued jurisdiction, the juvenile court may retain  
124 jurisdiction under this chapter for a period not to exceed 1  
125 year following the young adult's ~~youth's~~ 18th birthday for the  
126 purpose of determining whether appropriate ~~aftercare support,~~  
127 ~~Road to Independence Program, transitional support, mental~~  
128 ~~health, and developmental disability services~~ that were required  
129 to be provided to the young adult, ~~to the extent otherwise~~  
130 ~~authorized by law, have been provided to the formerly dependent~~  
131 ~~child who was in the legal custody of the department immediately~~  
132 ~~before his or her 18th birthday~~ were provided.

133 (d) If a petition for special immigrant juvenile status  
134 and an application for adjustment of status have been filed on  
135 behalf of a foster child and the petition and application have  
136 not been granted by the time the child reaches 18 years of age,  
137 the court may retain jurisdiction over the dependency case  
138 solely for the purpose of allowing the continued consideration  
139 of the petition and application by federal authorities. Review  
140 hearings for the child shall be set solely for the purpose of

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141 determining the status of the petition and application. The  
142 court's jurisdiction terminates upon the final decision of the  
143 federal authorities. Retention of jurisdiction in this instance  
144 does not affect the services available to a young adult under s.  
145 409.1451. The court may not retain jurisdiction of the case  
146 after the immigrant child's 22nd birthday.

147 Section 2. Subsection (6) of section 39.6013, Florida  
148 Statutes, is amended to read:

149 39.6013 Case plan amendments.—

150 (6) The case plan is deemed amended as to the child's  
151 health, mental health, and education records required by s.  
152 39.6012 when the child's updated health and education records  
153 are filed by the department under s. 39.701(2)(a) ~~39.701(8)(a)~~.

154 Section 3. Section 39.6035, Florida Statutes, is created  
155 to read:

156 39.6035 Transition plan.—

157 (1) During the 180-day period after a child reaches 17  
158 years of age, the department and the community-based care  
159 provider, in collaboration with the caregiver and any other  
160 individual who the child would like to include, shall assist the  
161 child in developing a transition plan. The required transition  
162 plan is in addition to standard case management requirements.  
163 The transition plan must address specific options for the child  
164 to use in obtaining services, including housing, health  
165 insurance, education, and workforce support and employment  
166 services. The plan must also consider establishing and  
167 maintaining naturally occurring mentoring relationships and  
168 other personal support services. The transition plan may be as

169 detailed as the child chooses. In developing the transition  
 170 plan, the department and the community-based provider shall:

171 (a) Provide the child with the documentation required  
 172 pursuant to s. 39.701(2).

173 (b) Coordinate the transition plan with the independent  
 174 living provisions in the case plan and, for a child with a  
 175 disability, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act  
 176 transition plan.

177 (2) The department and the child shall schedule a time,  
 178 date, and place for a meeting to assist the child in drafting  
 179 the transition plan. The time, date, and place must be  
 180 convenient for the child and any individual who the child would  
 181 like to include. This meeting shall be conducted in the child's  
 182 primary language.

183 (3) The transition plan shall be reviewed periodically  
 184 with the child, the department, and other individuals of the  
 185 child's choice and updated when necessary before each judicial  
 186 review so long as the child or young adult remains in care.

187 (4) If a child is planning to leave care upon reaching 18  
 188 years of age, the transition plan must be approved by the court  
 189 before the child leaves care and the court terminates  
 190 jurisdiction.

191 Section 4. Section 39.6251, Florida Statutes, is created  
 192 to read:

193 39.6251 Continuing care for young adults.-

194 (1) As used in this section, the term "child" means an  
 195 individual who has not attained 21 years of age and the term

196 "young adult" means an individual who has attained 18 years of  
197 age but who has not attained 21 years of age.

198 (2) The primary goal for a child in care is permanency. A  
199 child who is living in licensed care on his or her 18th birthday  
200 and who has not achieved permanency under s. 39.621 is eligible  
201 to remain in licensed care under the jurisdiction of the court  
202 and in the care of the department. A child is eligible to remain  
203 in licensed care if he or she is:

204 (a) Completing secondary education or a program leading to  
205 an equivalent credential;

206 (b) Enrolled in an institution that provides postsecondary  
207 or vocational education;

208 (c) Participating in a program or activity designed to  
209 promote or eliminate barriers to employment;

210 (d) Employed for at least 80 hours per month; or

211 (e) Unable to participate in programs or activities listed  
212 in paragraphs (a)-(d) full time due to a physical, intellectual,  
213 emotional, or psychiatric condition that limits participation.

214 Any such barrier to participation must be supported by  
215 documentation in the child's case file or school or medical  
216 records of a physical, intellectual, or psychiatric condition  
217 that impairs the child's ability to perform one or more life  
218 activities. This decision is to be made by the department, and  
219 is subject to judicial review.

220 (3) The permanency goal for a young adult who chooses to  
221 remain in care is transition from licensed care to independent  
222 living.



223       (4) (a) The young adult must reside in a supervised living  
224 environment that is approved by the department or a community-  
225 based care lead agency. The young adult shall live independently  
226 but in an environment in which he or she is provided  
227 supervision, case management, and supportive services by the  
228 department or lead agency. Such an environment must offer  
229 developmentally appropriate freedom and responsibility to  
230 prepare the young adult for adulthood. For the purposes of this  
231 subsection, a supervised living arrangement may include a  
232 licensed foster home, licensed group home, college dormitory,  
233 shared housing, apartment, or another housing arrangement if the  
234 arrangement is approved by the community-based care lead agency  
235 and is acceptable to the young adult, with first choice being a  
236 licensed foster home. A young adult may continue to reside with  
237 the same licensed foster family or group care provider with whom  
238 he or she was residing at the time he or she reached the age of  
239 18 years.

240       (b) Before approving the residential setting in which the  
241 young adult will live, the department or community-based care  
242 lead agency must ensure that:

243       1. The young adult will be provided with a level of  
244 supervision consistent with his or her individual education,  
245 health care needs, permanency plan, and independent living goals  
246 as assessed by the department or lead agency with input from the  
247 young adult. Twenty-four hour onsite supervision is not  
248 required; however, 24-hour crisis intervention and support must  
249 be available.

250        2. The young adult will live in an independent living  
251 environment that offers, at a minimum, life skills instruction,  
252 counseling, educational support, employment preparation and  
253 placement, and development of support networks. The  
254 determination of the type and duration of services shall be  
255 based on the young adult's assessed needs, interests, and input  
256 and must be consistent with the goals set in the young adult's  
257 case plan.

258        (5) Eligibility for a young adult to remain in extended  
259 foster care ends on the earliest of the dates that the young  
260 adult:

261            1. Reaches 21 years of age or, in the case of a young  
262 adult with a disability, reaches 22 years of age;

263            2. Leaves care to live in a permanent home consistent with  
264 his or her permanency plan; or

265            3. Knowingly and voluntarily withdraws his or her consent  
266 to participate in extended care. Withdrawal of consent to  
267 participate in extended care shall be verified by the court  
268 pursuant to s. 39.701, unless the young adult refuses to  
269 participate in any further court proceeding.

270        (6) A young adult who has reached 18 years of age but is  
271 not yet 21 years of age and who has left care may return to care  
272 by applying to the community-based care lead agency for  
273 readmission. The community-based care lead agency shall readmit  
274 the young adult if he or she continues to meet the eligibility  
275 requirements of this section.

276 (a) The department shall develop a standard procedure and  
277 application packet for readmission to care to be used by all  
278 community-based care lead agencies.

279 (b) Within 30 days after the young adult has been  
280 readmitted to care, the community-based care lead agency shall  
281 assign a case manager to update the case plan and the transition  
282 plan and to arrange for the required services. Such activities  
283 shall be undertaken in consultation with the young adult. The  
284 department shall petition the court to reinstate jurisdiction  
285 over the young adult.

286 (7) During each period of time that a young adult is in  
287 care, the community-based care lead agency shall provide regular  
288 case management reviews that must include at least monthly  
289 contact with the case manager. If a young adult lives outside  
290 the service area of his or her community-based care lead agency,  
291 monthly contact may occur by telephone.

292 (8) During the time that a young adult is in care, the  
293 court shall maintain jurisdiction to ensure that the department  
294 and the lead agencies are providing services and coordinate  
295 with, and maintain oversight of, other agencies involved in  
296 implementing the young adult's case plan, individual education  
297 plan, and transition plan. The court shall review the status of  
298 the young adult at least every 6 months and hold a permanency  
299 review hearing at least annually. The court may appoint a  
300 guardian ad litem or continue the appointment of a guardian ad  
301 litem with the young adult's consent. The young adult or any  
302 other party to the dependency case may request an additional  
303 hearing or review.

304       (9) The department shall establish a procedure by which a  
305 young adult may appeal a determination of eligibility to remain  
306 in care that was made by a community-based care lead agency. The  
307 procedure must be readily accessible to young adults, must  
308 provide for timely decisions, and must provide for an appeal to  
309 the department. The decision of the department constitutes final  
310 agency action and is reviewable by the court as provided in s.  
311 120.68.

312       Section 5. Section 39.701, Florida Statutes, is amended to  
313 read:

314       39.701 Judicial review.—

315       (1) GENERAL PROVISIONS.—

316       (a) The court shall have continuing jurisdiction in  
317 accordance with this section and shall review the status of the  
318 child at least every 6 months as required by this subsection or  
319 more frequently if the court deems it necessary or desirable.

320       (b) The court shall retain jurisdiction over a child  
321 returned to his or her parents for a minimum period of 6 months  
322 following the reunification, but, at that time, based on a  
323 report of the social service agency and the guardian ad litem,  
324 if one has been appointed, and any other relevant factors, the  
325 court shall make a determination as to whether supervision by  
326 the department and the court's jurisdiction shall continue or be  
327 terminated.

328       (c) 1. (2) (a) The court shall review the status of the child  
329 and shall hold a hearing as provided in this part at least every  
330 6 months until the child reaches permanency status. The court  
331 may dispense with the attendance of the child at the hearing,

332 but may not dispense with the hearing or the presence of other  
333 parties to the review unless before the review a hearing is held  
334 before a citizen review panel.

335 2.~~(b)~~ Citizen review panels may conduct hearings to review  
336 the status of a child. The court shall select the cases  
337 appropriate for referral to the citizen review panels and may  
338 order the attendance of the parties at the review panel  
339 hearings. However, any party may object to the referral of a  
340 case to a citizen review panel. Whenever such an objection has  
341 been filed with the court, the court shall review the substance  
342 of the objection and may conduct the review itself or refer the  
343 review to a citizen review panel. All parties retain the right  
344 to take exception to the findings or recommended orders of a  
345 citizen review panel in accordance with Rule 1.490(h), Florida  
346 Rules of Civil Procedure.

347 3.~~(e)~~ Notice of a hearing by a citizen review panel must  
348 be provided as set forth in paragraph (f) ~~subsection (5)~~. At the  
349 conclusion of a citizen review panel hearing, each party may  
350 propose a recommended order to the chairperson of the panel.  
351 Thereafter, the citizen review panel shall submit its report,  
352 copies of the proposed recommended orders, and a copy of the  
353 panel's recommended order to the court. The citizen review  
354 panel's recommended order must be limited to the dispositional  
355 options available to the court in paragraph (2)(d) ~~subsection~~  
356 ~~(10)~~. Each party may file exceptions to the report and  
357 recommended order of the citizen review panel in accordance with  
358 Rule 1.490, Florida Rules of Civil Procedure.

359        (d)1.~~(3)(a)~~ The initial judicial review hearing must be  
360 held no later than 90 days after the date of the disposition  
361 hearing or after the date of the hearing at which the court  
362 approves the case plan, whichever comes first, but in no event  
363 shall the review be held later than 6 months after the date the  
364 child was removed from the home. Citizen review panels may ~~shall~~  
365 not conduct more than two consecutive reviews without the child  
366 and the parties coming before the court for a judicial review.

367        2.~~(b)~~ If the citizen review panel recommends extending the  
368 goal of reunification for any case plan beyond 12 months from  
369 the date the child was removed from the home, the case plan was  
370 adopted, or the child was adjudicated dependent, whichever date  
371 came first, the court must schedule a judicial review hearing to  
372 be conducted by the court within 30 days after receiving the  
373 recommendation from the citizen review panel.

374        3.~~(e)~~ If the child is placed in the custody of the  
375 department or a licensed child-placing agency for the purpose of  
376 adoptive placement, judicial reviews must be held at least every  
377 6 months until the adoption is finalized.

378        4.~~(d)~~ If the department and the court have established a  
379 formal agreement that includes specific authorization for  
380 particular cases, the department may conduct administrative  
381 reviews instead of the judicial reviews for children in out-of-  
382 home care. Notices of such administrative reviews must be  
383 provided to all parties. However, an administrative review may  
384 not be substituted for the first judicial review, and in every  
385 case the court must conduct a judicial review at least every 6

386 months. Any party dissatisfied with the results of an  
387 administrative review may petition for a judicial review.

388 5.~~(e)~~ The clerk of the circuit court shall schedule  
389 judicial review hearings in order to comply with the mandated  
390 times cited in this section.

391 6.~~(f)~~ In each case in which a child has been voluntarily  
392 placed with the licensed child-placing agency, the agency shall  
393 notify the clerk of the court in the circuit where the child  
394 resides of such placement within 5 working days. Notification of  
395 the court is not required for any child who will be in out-of-  
396 home care no longer than 30 days unless that child is placed in  
397 out-of-home care a second time within a 12-month period. If the  
398 child is returned to the custody of the parents before the  
399 scheduled review hearing or if the child is placed for adoption,  
400 the child-placing agency shall notify the court of the child's  
401 return or placement within 5 working days, and the clerk of the  
402 court shall cancel the review hearing.

403 (e)~~(4)~~ The court shall schedule the date, time, and  
404 location of the next judicial review during the judicial review  
405 hearing and shall list same in the judicial review order.

406 (f)~~(5)~~ Notice of a judicial review hearing or a citizen  
407 review panel hearing, and a copy of the motion for judicial  
408 review, if any, must be served by the clerk of the court upon  
409 all of the following persons, if available to be served,  
410 regardless of whether the person was present at the previous  
411 hearing at which the date, time, and location of the hearing was  
412 announced:

413        1.~~(a)~~ The social service agency charged with the  
414 supervision of care, custody, or guardianship of the child, if  
415 that agency is not the movant.

416        2.~~(b)~~ The foster parent or legal custodian in whose home  
417 the child resides.

418        3.~~(c)~~ The parents.

419        4.~~(d)~~ The guardian ad litem for the child, or the  
420 representative of the guardian ad litem program if the program  
421 has been appointed.

422        5.~~(e)~~ The attorney for the child.

423        6.~~(f)~~ The child, if the child is 13 years of age or older.

424        7.~~(g)~~ Any preadoptive parent.

425        8.~~(h)~~ Such other persons as the court may direct.

426        (g)~~(6)~~ The attorney for the department shall notify a  
427 relative who submits a request for notification of all  
428 proceedings and hearings pursuant to s. 39.301(14) (b). The  
429 notice shall include the date, time, and location of the next  
430 judicial review hearing.

431        ~~(7) (a) In addition to paragraphs (1) (a) and (2) (a), the~~  
432 ~~court shall hold a judicial review hearing within 90 days after~~  
433 ~~a youth's 17th birthday. The court shall also issue an order,~~  
434 ~~separate from the order on judicial review, that the disability~~  
435 ~~of nonage of the youth has been removed pursuant to s. 743.045.~~  
436 ~~The court shall continue to hold timely judicial review hearings~~  
437 ~~thereafter. In addition, the court may review the status of the~~  
438 ~~child more frequently during the year prior to the youth's 18th~~  
439 ~~birthday if necessary. At each review held under this~~  
440 ~~subsection, in addition to any information or report provided to~~



441 ~~the court, the foster parent, legal custodian, guardian ad~~  
442 ~~litem, and the child shall be given the opportunity to address~~  
443 ~~the court with any information relevant to the child's best~~  
444 ~~interests, particularly as it relates to independent living~~  
445 ~~transition services. In addition to any information or report~~  
446 ~~provided to the court, the department shall include in its~~  
447 ~~judicial review social study report written verification that~~  
448 ~~the child:~~

449 ~~1. Has been provided with a current Medicaid card and has~~  
450 ~~been provided all necessary information concerning the Medicaid~~  
451 ~~program sufficient to prepare the youth to apply for coverage~~  
452 ~~upon reaching age 18, if such application would be appropriate.~~

453 ~~2. Has been provided with a certified copy of his or her~~  
454 ~~birth certificate and, if the child does not have a valid~~  
455 ~~driver's license, a Florida identification card issued under s.~~  
456 ~~322.051.~~

457 ~~3. Has been provided information relating to Social~~  
458 ~~Security Insurance benefits if the child is eligible for these~~  
459 ~~benefits. If the child has received these benefits and they are~~  
460 ~~being held in trust for the child, a full accounting of those~~  
461 ~~funds must be provided and the child must be informed about how~~  
462 ~~to access those funds.~~

463 ~~4. Has been provided with information and training related~~  
464 ~~to budgeting skills, interviewing skills, and parenting skills.~~

465 ~~5. Has been provided with all relevant information related~~  
466 ~~to the Road to Independence Program, including, but not limited~~  
467 ~~to, eligibility requirements, forms necessary to apply, and~~  
468 ~~assistance in completing the forms. The child shall also be~~

469 ~~informed that, if he or she is eligible for the Road-to-~~  
470 ~~Independence Program, he or she may reside with the licensed~~  
471 ~~foster family or group care provider with whom the child was~~  
472 ~~residing at the time of attaining his or her 18th birthday or~~  
473 ~~may reside in another licensed foster home or with a group care~~  
474 ~~provider arranged by the department.~~

475 ~~6. Has an open bank account, or has identification~~  
476 ~~necessary to open an account, and has been provided with~~  
477 ~~essential banking skills.~~

478 ~~7. Has been provided with information on public assistance~~  
479 ~~and how to apply.~~

480 ~~8. Has been provided a clear understanding of where he or~~  
481 ~~she will be living on his or her 18th birthday, how living~~  
482 ~~expenses will be paid, and what educational program or school he~~  
483 ~~or she will be enrolled in.~~

484 ~~9. Has been provided with notice of the youth's right to~~  
485 ~~petition for the court's continuing jurisdiction for 1 year~~  
486 ~~after the youth's 18th birthday as specified in s. 39.013(2) and~~  
487 ~~with information on how to obtain access to the court.~~

488 ~~10. Has been encouraged to attend all judicial review~~  
489 ~~hearings occurring after his or her 17th birthday.~~

490 ~~(b) At the first judicial review hearing held subsequent~~  
491 ~~to the child's 17th birthday, in addition to the requirements of~~  
492 ~~subsection (8), the department shall provide the court with an~~  
493 ~~updated case plan that includes specific information related to~~  
494 ~~independent living services that have been provided since the~~  
495 ~~child's 13th birthday, or since the date the child came into~~  
496 ~~foster care, whichever came later.~~

497 ~~(c) At the time of a judicial review hearing held pursuant~~  
 498 ~~to this subsection, if, in the opinion of the court, the~~  
 499 ~~department has not complied with its obligations as specified in~~  
 500 ~~the written case plan or in the provision of independent living~~  
 501 ~~services as required by s. 409.1451 and this subsection, the~~  
 502 ~~court shall issue a show cause order. If cause is shown for~~  
 503 ~~failure to comply, the court shall give the department 30 days~~  
 504 ~~within which to comply and, on failure to comply with this or~~  
 505 ~~any subsequent order, the department may be held in contempt.~~

506 (2)(8) REVIEW HEARINGS FOR CHILDREN YOUNGER THAN 18 YEARS  
 507 OF AGE.-

508 (a) Social study report for judicial review.—Before every  
 509 judicial review hearing or citizen review panel hearing, the  
 510 social service agency shall make an investigation and social  
 511 study concerning all pertinent details relating to the child and  
 512 shall furnish to the court or citizen review panel a written  
 513 report that includes, but is not limited to:

514 1. A description of the type of placement the child is in  
 515 at the time of the hearing, including the safety of the child  
 516 and the continuing necessity for and appropriateness of the  
 517 placement.

518 2. Documentation of the diligent efforts made by all  
 519 parties to the case plan to comply with each applicable  
 520 provision of the plan.

521 3. The amount of fees assessed and collected during the  
 522 period of time being reported.

523 4. The services provided to the foster family or legal  
524 custodian in an effort to address the needs of the child as  
525 indicated in the case plan.

526 5. A statement that either:

527 a. The parent, though able to do so, did not comply  
528 substantially with the case plan, and the agency  
529 recommendations;

530 b. The parent did substantially comply with the case plan;  
531 or

532 c. The parent has partially complied with the case plan,  
533 with a summary of additional progress needed and the agency  
534 recommendations.

535 6. A statement from the foster parent or legal custodian  
536 providing any material evidence concerning the return of the  
537 child to the parent or parents.

538 7. A statement concerning the frequency, duration, and  
539 results of the parent-child visitation, if any, and the agency  
540 recommendations for an expansion or restriction of future  
541 visitation.

542 8. The number of times a child has been removed from his  
543 or her home and placed elsewhere, the number and types of  
544 placements that have occurred, and the reason for the changes in  
545 placement.

546 9. The number of times a child's educational placement has  
547 been changed, the number and types of educational placements  
548 which have occurred, and the reason for any change in placement.

549 10. If the child has reached 13 years of age but is not  
550 yet 18 years of age, a statement from the caregiver on the

551 progress the child has made in acquiring independent living  
552 skills ~~the results of the preindependent living, life skills, or~~  
553 ~~independent living assessment; the specific services needed; and~~  
554 ~~the status of the delivery of the identified services.~~

555 11. Copies of all medical, psychological, and educational  
556 records that support the terms of the case plan and that have  
557 been produced concerning the parents or any caregiver since the  
558 last judicial review hearing.

559 12. Copies of the child's current health, mental health,  
560 and education records as identified in s. 39.6012.

561 (b) Submission and distribution of reports.-

562 1. A copy of the social service agency's written report  
563 and the written report of the guardian ad litem must be served  
564 on all parties whose whereabouts are known; to the foster  
565 parents or legal custodians; and to the citizen review panel, at  
566 least 72 hours before the judicial review hearing or citizen  
567 review panel hearing. The requirement for providing parents with  
568 a copy of the written report does not apply to those parents who  
569 have voluntarily surrendered their child for adoption or who  
570 have had their parental rights to the child terminated.

571 ~~2.(e)~~ In a case in which the child has been permanently  
572 placed with the social service agency, the agency shall furnish  
573 to the court a written report concerning the progress being made  
574 to place the child for adoption. If the child cannot be placed  
575 for adoption, a report on the progress made by the child towards  
576 alternative permanency goals or placements, including, but not  
577 limited to, guardianship, long-term custody, long-term licensed  
578 custody, or independent living, must be submitted to the court.

579 The report must be submitted to the court at least 72 hours  
580 before each scheduled judicial review.

581 ~~3.(d)~~ In addition to or in lieu of any written statement  
582 provided to the court, the foster parent or legal custodian, or  
583 any preadoptive parent, shall be given the opportunity to  
584 address the court with any information relevant to the best  
585 interests of the child at any judicial review hearing.

586 ~~(c)(9)~~ Review determinations.—The court and any citizen  
587 review panel shall take into consideration the information  
588 contained in the social services study and investigation and all  
589 medical, psychological, and educational records that support the  
590 terms of the case plan; testimony by the social services agency,  
591 the parent, the foster parent or legal custodian, the guardian  
592 ad litem or surrogate parent for educational decisionmaking if  
593 one has been appointed for the child, and any other person  
594 deemed appropriate; and any relevant and material evidence  
595 submitted to the court, including written and oral reports to  
596 the extent of their probative value. These reports and evidence  
597 may be received by the court in its effort to determine the  
598 action to be taken with regard to the child and may be relied  
599 upon to the extent of their probative value, even though not  
600 competent in an adjudicatory hearing. In its deliberations, the  
601 court and any citizen review panel shall seek to determine:

602 ~~1.(a)~~ If the parent was advised of the right to receive  
603 assistance from any person or social service agency in the  
604 preparation of the case plan.

605 ~~2.(b)~~ If the parent has been advised of the right to have  
606 counsel present at the judicial review or citizen review

607 hearings. If not so advised, the court or citizen review panel  
608 shall advise the parent of such right.

609 3.~~(e)~~ If a guardian ad litem needs to be appointed for the  
610 child in a case in which a guardian ad litem has not previously  
611 been appointed or if there is a need to continue a guardian ad  
612 litem in a case in which a guardian ad litem has been appointed.

613 4.~~(d)~~ Who holds the rights to make educational decisions  
614 for the child. If appropriate, the court may refer the child to  
615 the district school superintendent for appointment of a  
616 surrogate parent or may itself appoint a surrogate parent under  
617 the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and s. 39.0016.

618 5.~~(e)~~ The compliance or lack of compliance of all parties  
619 with applicable items of the case plan, including the parents'  
620 compliance with child support orders.

621 6.~~(f)~~ The compliance or lack of compliance with a  
622 visitation contract between the parent and the social service  
623 agency for contact with the child, including the frequency,  
624 duration, and results of the parent-child visitation and the  
625 reason for any noncompliance.

626 7.~~(g)~~ The compliance or lack of compliance of the parent  
627 in meeting specified financial obligations pertaining to the  
628 care of the child, including the reason for failure to comply if  
629 such is the case.

630 8.~~(h)~~ Whether the child is receiving safe and proper care  
631 according to s. 39.6012, including, but not limited to, the  
632 appropriateness of the child's current placement, including  
633 whether the child is in a setting that is as family-like and as  
634 close to the parent's home as possible, consistent with the

635 child's best interests and special needs, and including  
636 maintaining stability in the child's educational placement, as  
637 documented by assurances from the community-based care provider  
638 that:

639 a.1. The placement of the child takes into account the  
640 appropriateness of the current educational setting and the  
641 proximity to the school in which the child is enrolled at the  
642 time of placement.

643 b.2. The community-based care agency has coordinated with  
644 appropriate local educational agencies to ensure that the child  
645 remains in the school in which the child is enrolled at the time  
646 of placement.

647 9.(i) A projected date likely for the child's return home  
648 or other permanent placement.

649 10.(j) When appropriate, the basis for the unwillingness  
650 or inability of the parent to become a party to a case plan. The  
651 court and the citizen review panel shall determine if the  
652 efforts of the social service agency to secure party  
653 participation in a case plan were sufficient.

654 11.(k) For a child who has reached 13 years of age but is  
655 not yet 18 years of age, the adequacy of the child's preparation  
656 for adulthood and independent living.

657 12.(l) If amendments to the case plan are required.  
658 Amendments to the case plan must be made under s. 39.6013.

659 (d)(10)(a) Orders.-

660 1. Based upon the criteria set forth in paragraph (c)  
661 subsection (9) and the recommended order of the citizen review  
662 panel, if any, the court shall determine whether or not the



663 social service agency shall initiate proceedings to have a child  
664 declared a dependent child, return the child to the parent,  
665 continue the child in out-of-home care for a specified period of  
666 time, or initiate termination of parental rights proceedings for  
667 subsequent placement in an adoptive home. Amendments to the case  
668 plan must be prepared as prescribed in s. 39.6013. If the court  
669 finds that the prevention or reunification efforts of the  
670 department will allow the child to remain safely at home or be  
671 safely returned to the home, the court shall allow the child to  
672 remain in or return to the home after making a specific finding  
673 of fact that the reasons for the creation of the case plan have  
674 been remedied to the extent that the child's safety, well-being,  
675 and physical, mental, and emotional health will not be  
676 endangered.

677 2.~~(b)~~ The court shall return the child to the custody of  
678 the parents at any time it determines that they have  
679 substantially complied with the case plan, if the court is  
680 satisfied that reunification will not be detrimental to the  
681 child's safety, well-being, and physical, mental, and emotional  
682 health.

683 3.~~(e)~~ If, in the opinion of the court, the social service  
684 agency has not complied with its obligations as specified in the  
685 written case plan, the court may find the social service agency  
686 in contempt, shall order the social service agency to submit its  
687 plans for compliance with the agreement, and shall require the  
688 social service agency to show why the child could not safely be  
689 returned to the home of the parents.

690        4.~~(d)~~ If, at any judicial review, the court finds that the  
691 parents have failed to substantially comply with the case plan  
692 to the degree that further reunification efforts are without  
693 merit and not in the best interest of the child, on its own  
694 motion, the court may order the filing of a petition for  
695 termination of parental rights, whether or not the time period  
696 as contained in the case plan for substantial compliance has  
697 expired.

698        5.~~(e)~~ Within 6 months after the date that the child was  
699 placed in shelter care, the court shall conduct a judicial  
700 review hearing to review the child's permanency goal as  
701 identified in the case plan. At the hearing the court shall make  
702 findings regarding the likelihood of the child's reunification  
703 with the parent or legal custodian within 12 months after the  
704 removal of the child from the home. If the court makes a written  
705 finding that it is not likely that the child will be reunified  
706 with the parent or legal custodian within 12 months after the  
707 child was removed from the home, the department must file with  
708 the court, and serve on all parties, a motion to amend the case  
709 plan under s. 39.6013 and declare that it will use concurrent  
710 planning for the case plan. The department must file the motion  
711 within 10 business days after receiving the written finding of  
712 the court. The department must attach the proposed amended case  
713 plan to the motion. If concurrent planning is already being  
714 used, the case plan must document the efforts the department is  
715 taking to complete the concurrent goal.

716        6.~~(f)~~ The court may issue a protective order in  
717 assistance, or as a condition, of any other order made under

718 | this part. In addition to the requirements included in the case  
719 | plan, the protective order may set forth requirements relating  
720 | to reasonable conditions of behavior to be observed for a  
721 | specified period of time by a person or agency who is before the  
722 | court; and the order may require any person or agency to make  
723 | periodic reports to the court containing such information as the  
724 | court in its discretion may prescribe.

725 | (3) REVIEW HEARINGS FOR CHILDREN 17 YEARS OF AGE.—

726 | (a) In addition to the review and report required under  
727 | paragraphs (1)(a) and (2)(a), respectively, the court shall hold  
728 | a judicial review hearing within 90 days after a child's 17th  
729 | birthday. The court shall also issue an order, separate from the  
730 | order on judicial review, that the disability of nonage of the  
731 | child has been removed pursuant to s. 743.045 and shall continue  
732 | to hold timely judicial review hearings. If necessary, the court  
733 | may review the status of the child more frequently during the  
734 | year before the child's 18th birthday. At each review hearing  
735 | held under this subsection, in addition to any information or  
736 | report provided to the court by the foster parent, legal  
737 | custodian, or guardian ad litem, the child shall be given the  
738 | opportunity to address the court with any information relevant  
739 | to the child's best interest, particularly in relation to  
740 | independent living transition services. The department shall  
741 | include in the social study report for judicial review written  
742 | verification that the child has:

743 | 1. A current Medicaid card and all necessary information  
744 | concerning the Medicaid program sufficient to prepare the child

745 to apply for coverage upon reaching the age of 18, if such  
746 application is appropriate.

747 2. A certified copy of the child's birth certificate and a  
748 valid driver license or, if the child does not have a valid  
749 driver license, a Florida identification card issued under s.  
750 322.051.

751 3. A social security card and information relating to  
752 social security insurance benefits if the child is eligible for  
753 those benefits. If the child has received such benefits and they  
754 are being held in trust for the child, a full accounting of  
755 these funds must be provided and the child must be informed as  
756 to how to access those funds.

757 4. All relevant information related to the Road-to-  
758 Independence Program, including, but not limited to, eligibility  
759 requirements, information on participation, and assistance in  
760 gaining admission to the program. If the child is eligible for  
761 the Road-to-Independence Program, he or she must be advised that  
762 he or she may continue to reside with the licensed family home  
763 or group care provider with whom the child was residing at the  
764 time the child attained his or her 18th birthday, in another  
765 licensed family home, or with a group care provider arranged by  
766 the department.

767 5. An open bank account or the identification necessary to  
768 open a bank account and to acquire essential banking and  
769 budgeting skills.

770 6. Information on public assistance and how to apply for  
771 public assistance.

772 7. A clear understanding of where he or she will be living  
773 on his or her 18th birthday, how living expenses will be paid,  
774 and the educational program or school in which he or she will be  
775 enrolled.

776 8. Information related to the ability of the child to  
777 remain in care until he or she reaches 21 years of age under s.  
778 39.013.

779 9. A letter providing the dates that the child is under  
780 the jurisdiction of the court.

781 10. When applicable, a letter stating that the child is in  
782 compliance with financial aid documentation requirements.

783 11. The child's educational records.

784 12. The child's entire health and mental health records.

785 13. The process for accessing his or her case file.

786 14. A statement encouraging the child to attend all  
787 judicial review hearings occurring after the child's 17th  
788 birthday.

789 (b) At the first judicial review hearing held subsequent  
790 to the child's 17th birthday, the department shall provide the  
791 court with an updated case plan that includes specific  
792 information related to the independent living skills that the  
793 child has acquired since the child's 13th birthday, or since the  
794 date the child came into foster care, whichever came later.

795 (c) If the court finds at the judicial review hearing that  
796 the department has not met with its obligations to the child as  
797 stated in the written case plan or in the provision of  
798 independent living services, the court may issue an order  
799 directing the department to show cause as to why it has not done

800 so. If the department cannot justify its noncompliance, the  
 801 court may give the department 30 days within which to comply. If  
 802 the department fails to comply within 30 days, the court may  
 803 hold the department in contempt.

804 (d) At the last review hearing before the child reaches 18  
 805 years of age, and in addition to the requirements of subsection  
 806 (2), the court shall:

807 1. Address whether the child plans to remain in foster  
 808 care, and, if so, ensure that the child's transition plan  
 809 includes a plan for meeting one or more of the criteria  
 810 specified in s. 39.6251.

811 2. Ensure that the transition plan includes a supervised  
 812 living arrangement under s. 39.6251.

813 3. Ensure the child has been informed of:

814 a. The right to continued support and services from the  
 815 department and the community-based care lead agency.

816 b. The right to request termination of dependency  
 817 jurisdiction and be discharged from foster care.

818 c. The opportunity to reenter foster care pursuant to s.  
 819 39.6251.

820 4. Ensure that the young adult, if he or she requests  
 821 termination of dependency jurisdiction and discharge from foster  
 822 care, has been informed of:

823 a. Services or benefits for which the young adult may be  
 824 eligible based on his or her former placement in foster care.

825 b. Services or benefits that may be lost through  
 826 termination of dependency jurisdiction.

827 c. Other federal, state, local, or community-based  
828 services or supports available to him or her.

829 (4) REVIEW HEARINGS FOR YOUNG ADULTS IN FOSTER CARE.—  
830 During each period of time that a young adult remains in foster  
831 care, the court shall review the status of the young adult at  
832 least every 6 months and must hold a permanency review hearing  
833 at least annually.

834 (a) The department and community-based care lead agency  
835 shall prepare and submit to the court a report, developed in  
836 collaboration with the young adult, which addresses the young  
837 adult's progress in meeting the goals in the case plan. The  
838 report must include progress information related to the young  
839 adult's independent living plan and transition plan, if  
840 applicable, and shall propose modifications as necessary to  
841 further the young adult's goals.

842 (b) The court shall attempt to determine whether the  
843 department and any service provider under contract with the  
844 department are providing the appropriate services as provided in  
845 the case plan.

846 (c) If the court believes that the young adult is entitled  
847 under department policy or under a contract with a service  
848 provider to additional services to achieve the goals enumerated  
849 in the case plan, it may order the department to take action to  
850 ensure that the young adult receives the identified services.

851 (d) The young adult or any other party to the dependency  
852 case may request an additional hearing or judicial review.

853 (e) Notwithstanding the provisions of this subsection, if  
854 a young adult has chosen to remain in extended foster care after

855 he or she has reached 18 years of age, the department may not  
856 close a case and the court may not terminate jurisdiction until  
857 the court finds, following a hearing, that the following  
858 criteria have been met:

859 1. Attendance of the young adult at the hearing; or

860 2. Findings by the court that:

861 a. The young adult has been informed by the department of  
862 his or her right to attend the hearing and has provided written  
863 consent to waive this right; and

864 b. The young adult has been informed of the potential  
865 negative effects of early termination of care, the option to  
866 reenter care before reaching 21 years of age, the procedure for,  
867 and limitations on, reentering care, and the availability of  
868 alternative services, and has signed a document attesting that  
869 he or she has been so informed and understands these provisions;  
870 or

871 c. The young adult has voluntarily left the program, has  
872 not signed the document in sub-subparagraph b., and is unwilling  
873 to participate in any further court proceeding.

874 (f) In all permanency hearings or hearings regarding the  
875 transition of the young adult from care to independent living,  
876 the court shall consult with the young adult regarding the  
877 proposed permanency plan, case plan, and individual education  
878 plan for the young adult and ensure that he or she has  
879 understood the conversation.

880 Section 6. Section 409.145, Florida Statutes, is amended  
881 to read:



882           409.145 Care of children; quality parenting; "reasonable  
 883 and prudent parent" standard.—The child welfare system of the  
 884 department shall operate as a coordinated community-based system  
 885 of care which empowers all caregivers for children in foster  
 886 care to provide quality parenting, including approving or  
 887 disapproving a child's participation in activities based on the  
 888 caregiver's assessment using the "reasonable and prudent parent"  
 889 standard.

890           (1) SYSTEM OF CARE.—The department shall develop,  
 891 implement ~~conduct, supervise,~~ and administer a coordinated  
 892 community-based system of care ~~program~~ for ~~dependent~~ children  
 893 who are found to be dependent and their families. This system of  
 894 care must ~~The services of the department are to be directed~~  
 895 toward the following goals:

896           (a) ~~The~~ Prevention of separation of children from their  
 897 families.

898           (b) Intervention to allow children to remain safely in  
 899 their own homes.

900           (c) ~~(b)~~ ~~The~~ Reunification of families who have had children  
 901 removed from their care ~~placed in foster homes or institutions.~~

902           (d) Safety for children who are separated from their  
 903 families by providing alternative emergency or longer-term  
 904 parenting arrangements.

905           (e) Well-being of children through emphasis on maintaining  
 906 educational stability and providing timely health care.

907           (f) ~~(e)~~ Permanency for ~~The permanent placement of children~~  
 908 for whom reunification ~~who cannot be reunited with their~~

909 families is not possible or ~~when reunification would~~ is not be  
910 in the best interest of the child.

911 ~~(d) The protection of dependent children or children~~  
912 ~~alleged to be dependent, including provision of emergency and~~  
913 ~~long-term alternate living arrangements.~~

914 (g)(e) The transition to independence and self-sufficiency  
915 for older children who remain in foster care through adolescence  
916 ~~continue to be in foster care as adolescents.~~

917 ~~(2) The following dependent children shall be subject to~~  
918 ~~the protection, care, guidance, and supervision of the~~  
919 ~~department or any duly licensed public or private agency:~~

920 ~~(a) Any child who has been temporarily or permanently~~  
921 ~~taken from the custody of the parents, custodians, or guardians~~  
922 ~~in accordance with those provisions in chapter 39 that relate to~~  
923 ~~dependent children.~~

924 ~~(b) Any child who is in need of the protective supervision~~  
925 ~~of the department as determined by intake or by the court in~~  
926 ~~accordance with those provisions of chapter 39 that relate to~~  
927 ~~dependent children.~~

928 ~~(c) Any child who is voluntarily placed, with the written~~  
929 ~~consent of the parents or guardians, in the department's foster~~  
930 ~~care program or the foster care program of a licensed private~~  
931 ~~agency.~~

932 ~~(3) The circuit courts exercising juvenile jurisdiction in~~  
933 ~~the various counties of this state shall cooperate with the~~  
934 ~~department and its employees in carrying out the purposes and~~  
935 ~~intent of this chapter.~~

936       ~~(4) The department is authorized to accept children on a~~  
937 ~~permanent placement basis by order of a court of competent~~  
938 ~~jurisdiction for the single purpose of adoption placement of~~  
939 ~~these children. The department is authorized to provide the~~  
940 ~~necessary services to place these children ordered to the~~  
941 ~~department on a permanent placement basis for adoption.~~

942       ~~(5) Any funds appropriated by counties for child welfare~~  
943 ~~services may be matched by state and federal funds, such funds~~  
944 ~~to be utilized by the department for the benefit of children in~~  
945 ~~those counties.~~

946       ~~(6) Whenever any child is placed under the protection,~~  
947 ~~care, and guidance of the department or a duly licensed public~~  
948 ~~or private agency, or as soon thereafter as is practicable, the~~  
949 ~~department or agency, as the case may be, shall endeavor to~~  
950 ~~obtain such information concerning the family medical history of~~  
951 ~~the child and the natural parents as is available or readily~~  
952 ~~obtainable. This information shall be kept on file by the~~  
953 ~~department or agency for possible future use as provided in ss.~~  
954 ~~63.082 and 63.162 or as may be otherwise provided by law.~~

955       ~~(7) Whenever any child is placed by the department in a~~  
956 ~~shelter home, foster home, or other residential placement, the~~  
957 ~~department shall make available to the operator of the shelter~~  
958 ~~home, foster home, other residential placement, or other~~  
959 ~~caretaker as soon thereafter as is practicable, all relevant~~  
960 ~~information concerning the child's demographic, social, and~~  
961 ~~medical history.~~

962       (2) QUALITY PARENTING.—A child in foster care shall be  
963 placed only with a caregiver who has the ability to care for the

964 child, is willing to accept responsibility for providing care,  
965 and is willing and able to learn about and be respectful of the  
966 child's culture, religion and ethnicity, special physical or  
967 psychological needs, unique circumstances, and family  
968 relationships. The department, the community-based care lead  
969 agency, and other agencies shall provide such caregiver with all  
970 available information necessary to assist the caregiver in  
971 determining whether he or she is able to appropriately care for  
972 a particular child.

973 (a) Roles and responsibilities of caregivers.—A caregiver  
974 shall:

975 1. Participate in developing the case plan for the child  
976 and his or her family and work with others involved in his or  
977 her care to implement this plan. This participation includes the  
978 caregiver's involvement in all team meetings or court hearings  
979 related to the child's care.

980 2. Complete all training needed to improve skills in  
981 parenting a child who has experienced trauma due to neglect,  
982 abuse, or separation from home, to meet the child's special  
983 needs, and to work effectively with child welfare agencies, the  
984 court, the schools, and other community and governmental  
985 agencies.

986 3. Respect and support the child's ties to members of his  
987 or her biological family and assist the child in maintaining  
988 allowable visitation and other forms of communication.

989 4. Effectively advocate for the child in the caregiver's  
990 care with the child welfare system, the court, and community

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991 agencies, including the school, child care providers, health and  
992 mental health providers, and employers.

993 5. Participate fully in the child's medical,  
994 psychological, and dental care as the caregiver would for his or  
995 her biological child.

996 6. Support the child's school success by participating in  
997 school activities and meetings, including individual education  
998 plan meetings, assisting with school assignments, supporting  
999 tutoring programs, meeting with teachers and working with an  
1000 educational surrogate if one has been appointed, and encouraging  
1001 the child's participation in extracurricular activities.

1002 7. Work in partnership with other stakeholders to obtain  
1003 and maintain records that are important to the child's well-  
1004 being, including child resource records, medical records, school  
1005 records, photographs, and records of special events and  
1006 achievements.

1007 8. Ensure that the child who has reached 13 years of age  
1008 but is not yet 17 years of age learns and masters independent  
1009 living skills.

1010 9. Ensure that the child is aware of the requirements and  
1011 benefits of the Road-to-Independence Program.

1012 10. Work to enable the child to establish and maintain  
1013 naturally occurring mentoring relationships.

1014 (b) Roles and responsibilities of the department, the  
1015 community-based care lead agency, and other agency staff.—The  
1016 department, the community-based care lead agency, and other  
1017 agency staff shall:

1018 1. Include the caregiver in the development and  
1019 implementation of the case plan for the child and his or her  
1020 family. The caregiver shall be authorized to participate in all  
1021 team meetings or court hearings related to the child's care and  
1022 future plans. The caregiver's participation shall be facilitated  
1023 through timely notification, an inclusive process, and  
1024 alternative methods for participation for a caregiver who cannot  
1025 be physically present.

1026 2. Develop and make available to the caregiver the  
1027 information, services, training, and support that the caregiver  
1028 needs to improve his or her skills in parenting children who  
1029 have experienced trauma due to neglect, abuse, or separation  
1030 from home, to meet these children's special needs, and to  
1031 advocate effectively with child welfare agencies, the courts,  
1032 schools, and other community and governmental agencies.

1033 3. Provide the caregiver with all information related to  
1034 services and other benefits that are available to the child.

1035 (c) Transitions.—

1036 1. Once a caregiver accepts the responsibility of caring  
1037 for a child, the child will be removed from the home of that  
1038 caregiver only if:

1039 a. The caregiver is clearly unable to safely or legally  
1040 care for the child;

1041 b. The child and his or her biological family are  
1042 reunified;

1043 c. The child is being placed in a legally permanent home  
1044 pursuant to the case plan or a court order;

1045 d. The removal is demonstrably in the child's best  
1046 interest; or

1047 e. The caregiver is no longer able or willing to care for  
1048 the child.

1049 2. In the absence of an emergency, if a child leaves the  
1050 caregiver's home for a reason provided under subparagraph 1.,  
1051 the transition must be accomplished according to a plan that  
1052 involves cooperation and sharing of information among all  
1053 persons involved, respects the child's developmental stage and  
1054 psychological needs, ensures the child has all of his or her  
1055 belongings, and allows for a gradual transition from the  
1056 caregiver's home and, if possible, for continued contact with  
1057 the caregiver after the child leaves.

1058 (d) Information sharing.—Whenever a foster home or  
1059 residential group home assumes responsibility for the care of a  
1060 child, the department and any additional providers shall make  
1061 available to the caregiver as soon as is practicable all  
1062 relevant information concerning the child. Records and  
1063 information that are required to be shared with caregivers  
1064 include, but are not limited to:

1065 1. Medical, dental, psychological, psychiatric, and  
1066 behavioral history, as well as ongoing evaluation or treatment  
1067 needs.

1068 2. School records.

1069 3. Copies of his or her birth certificate and, if  
1070 appropriate, immigration status documents.

1071 4. Consents signed by parents.

1072 5. Comprehensive behavioral assessments and other social  
 1073 assessments.

1074 6. Court orders.

1075 7. Visitation and case plans.

1076 8. Guardian ad litem reports.

1077 9. Staffing forms.

1078 10. Judicial or citizen review panel reports and  
 1079 attachments filed with the court, except confidential medical,  
 1080 psychiatric, and psychological information regarding any party  
 1081 or participant other than the child.

1082 (e) Caregivers employed by residential group homes.-All  
 1083 caregivers in residential group homes shall meet the same  
 1084 education, training, and background and other screening  
 1085 requirements as foster parents.

1086 (3) REASONABLE AND PRUDENT PARENT STANDARD.-

1087 (a) Definitions.-As used in this subsection, the term:

1088 1. "Age-appropriate" means generally accepted as suitable  
 1089 for a child of the same chronological age or level of maturity.  
 1090 Age appropriateness is based on the development of cognitive,  
 1091 emotional, physical, and behavioral capacity which is typical  
 1092 for an age or age group.

1093 2. "Caregiver" means a person with whom the child is  
 1094 placed in out-of-home care, or a designated official for a group  
 1095 care facility licensed by the department under s. 409.175.

1096 3. "Reasonable and prudent parent standard" means the  
 1097 standard characterized by careful and sensible parental  
 1098 decisions that maintain the child's health, safety, and best  
 1099 interest while at the same time encouraging the child's



1100 emotional and developmental growth, that a caregiver shall use  
 1101 when determining whether to allow a child in out-of-home care to  
 1102 participate in extracurricular, enrichment, and social  
 1103 activities.

1104 (b) Application of standard of care.—

1105 1. Every child who comes into out-of-home care pursuant to  
 1106 this chapter is entitled to participate in age-appropriate  
 1107 extracurricular, enrichment, and social activities.

1108 2. Each caregiver shall use the reasonable and prudent  
 1109 parent standard in determining whether to give permission for a  
 1110 child living in out-of-home care to participate in  
 1111 extracurricular, enrichment, or social activities. When using  
 1112 the reasonable and prudent parent standard, the caregiver must  
 1113 consider:

1114 a. The child's age, maturity, and developmental level to  
 1115 maintain the overall health and safety of the child.

1116 b. The potential risk factors and the appropriateness of  
 1117 the extracurricular, enrichment, or social activity.

1118 c. The best interest of the child, based on information  
 1119 known by the caregiver.

1120 d. The importance of encouraging the child's emotional and  
 1121 developmental growth.

1122 e. The importance of providing the child with the most  
 1123 family-like living experience possible.

1124 f. The behavioral history of the child and the child's  
 1125 ability to safely participate in the proposed activity.

1126 (c) Verification of services delivered.—The department and  
 1127 each community-based care lead agency shall verify that private

1128 agencies providing out-of-home care services to dependent  
 1129 children have policies in place which are consistent with this  
 1130 section and that these agencies promote and protect the ability  
 1131 of dependent children to participate in age-appropriate  
 1132 extracurricular, enrichment, and social activities.

1133 (d) Limitation of liability.—A caregiver is not liable for  
 1134 harm caused to a child who participates in an activity approved  
 1135 by the caregiver, provided that the caregiver has acted in  
 1136 accordance with the reasonable and prudent parent standard. This  
 1137 paragraph may not be interpreted as removing or limiting any  
 1138 existing liability protection afforded by law.

1139 (4) FOSTER PARENT ROOM AND BOARD RATES.—

1140 (a) Effective October 1, 2013, monthly room and board  
 1141 rates paid to foster parents are as follows:

<u>Monthly Foster</u>	<u>0-5 Years Age</u>	<u>6-12 Years Age</u>	<u>13-21 Years Age</u>
<u>Care Rate</u>			
	<u>\$429</u>	<u>\$440</u>	<u>\$515</u>

1146 (b) Foster parents who are receiving the minimum room and  
 1147 board rate as provided in paragraph (a) shall receive an annual  
 1148 cost-of-living increase. The department shall calculate the new  
 1149 room and board rate increase equal to the percentage change in  
 1150 the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers, U.S. City  
 1151 Average, All Items, not seasonally adjusted, or successor  
 1152 reports, for the preceding December compared to the prior

1153 December as initially reported by the United States Department  
 1154 of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics.

1155 (c) The amount of the monthly foster parent room and board  
 1156 rate may be increased upon agreement among the department, the  
 1157 community-based care lead agency, and the foster parent.

1158 (d) Community-based care lead agencies providing care  
 1159 under contract with the department may pay a supplemental room  
 1160 and board payment to foster care parents for providing  
 1161 independent life skills and normalcy supports to children who  
 1162 are age 13 through 17 placed in their care. The supplemental  
 1163 payment shall be paid monthly to the foster care parents on a  
 1164 per-child basis in addition to the current monthly room and  
 1165 board rate payment. The supplemental monthly payment shall be  
 1166 based on 10 percent of the monthly room and board rate for  
 1167 children age 13 through 21 as provided under this section and  
 1168 adjusted annually.

1169 (5) RULEMAKING.—The department shall adopt by rule  
 1170 procedures to administer this section.

1171 Section 7. Section 409.1451, Florida Statutes, is amended  
 1172 to read:

1173 (Substantial rewording of section. See  
 1174 s. 409.1451, F.S., for present text).

1175 409.1451 The Road-to-Independence Program.—

1176 (1) LEGISLATIVE FINDINGS AND INTENT.—

1177 (a) The Legislature recognizes that most children and  
 1178 young adults are resilient and, with adequate support, can  
 1179 expect to be successful as independent adults. Not unlike many  
 1180 young adults, some young adults who have lived in foster care

1181 need additional support and resources for a period of time after  
 1182 reaching 18 years of age.

1183 (b) The Legislature finds that while it is important to  
 1184 provide young adults who have lived in foster care with  
 1185 education and independent living skills, there is also a need to  
 1186 focus more broadly on creating and preserving family  
 1187 relationships so that young adults have a permanent connection  
 1188 with at least one committed adult who provides a safe and stable  
 1189 parenting relationship.

1190 (c) It is the intent of the Legislature that young adults  
 1191 who choose to participate in the program receive the skills,  
 1192 education, and support necessary to become self-sufficient and  
 1193 leave foster care with a lifelong connection to a supportive  
 1194 adult through the Road-to-Independence Program, either through  
 1195 postsecondary education services and support, as provided in  
 1196 subsection (2), or aftercare services.

1197 (2) POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION SERVICES AND SUPPORT.—

1198 (a) A young adult is eligible for services and support  
 1199 under this subsection if he or she:

1200 1. Was living in licensed care on his or her 18th birthday  
 1201 or is currently living in licensed care, or was at least 16  
 1202 years of age and was adopted from foster care or placed with a  
 1203 court-approved dependency guardian after spending at least 6  
 1204 months in licensed care within the 12 months immediately  
 1205 preceding such placement or adoption;

1206 2. Spent at least 6 months in licensed care before  
 1207 reaching his or her 18th birthday;

1208 3. Earned a standard high school diploma or its equivalent  
 1209 pursuant to s. 1003.428, s. 1003.4281, s. 1003.429, s. 1003.43,  
 1210 or s. 1003.435;

1211 4. Has been admitted for enrollment as a full-time student  
 1212 or its equivalent in an eligible postsecondary educational  
 1213 institution as provided in s. 1009.533 unless the young adult  
 1214 has a recognized disability preventing full-time attendance;

1215 5. Has reached 18 years of age but is not yet 23 years of  
 1216 age;

1217 6. Has applied, with assistance from the young adult's  
 1218 caregiver and the community-based care lead agency, for grants  
 1219 and scholarships;

1220 7. Submitted a Free Application for Federal Student Aid  
 1221 which is complete and error free; and

1222 8. Signed an agreement to allow the department and the  
 1223 community-based care lead agency access to school records.

1224 (b) The amount of the financial assistance shall be as  
 1225 follows:

1226 1. For a young adult who does not remain in foster care  
 1227 and is attending a postsecondary educational institution as  
 1228 provided in s. 1009.533, the amount is \$1,256 monthly.

1229 2. For a young adult who remains in foster care, is  
 1230 attending a postsecondary educational institution as provided in  
 1231 s. 1009.533, and continues to reside in a licensed foster home,  
 1232 the amount is the established room and board rate for foster  
 1233 parents as provided in s. 409.145(4).

1234 3. For a young adult who remains in foster care, but  
 1235 temporarily resides away from a licensed foster home for

1236 purposes of attending a postsecondary educational institution as  
1237 provided in s. 1009.533, the amount is \$1,256 monthly while the  
1238 young adult resides away from the licensed group home. The  
1239 amount is the board rate while the child resides in the foster  
1240 home, instead of the \$1,256.

1241 4. For a young adult who remains in foster care, is  
1242 attending a postsecondary educational institution as provided in  
1243 s. 1009.533, and continues to reside in a licensed group home,  
1244 the amount is negotiated between the community-based care lead  
1245 agency and the licensed group home provider.

1246 5. For a young adult who remains in foster care but  
1247 temporarily resides away from a licensed group home for purposes  
1248 of attending a postsecondary educational institution as provided  
1249 in s. 1009.533, the amount is \$1,256 monthly while the young  
1250 adult resides away from the licensed group home. The amount is  
1251 negotiated between the licensed group home and the community-  
1252 based care lead agency while the young adult resides in the  
1253 licensed group home, instead of the \$1,256.

1254 6. The amount of the award may be disregarded for purposes  
1255 of determining the eligibility for, or the amount of, any other  
1256 federal or federally supported assistance.

1257 7. A young adult is eligible to receive financial  
1258 assistance during the months when enrolled in a postsecondary  
1259 educational institution.

1260 (c) Payment of financial assistance for a young adult who:

1261 1. Has chosen not to remain in foster care and is  
1262 attending a postsecondary educational institution as provided in  
1263 s. 1009.533 shall be made to the community-based care lead

1264 agency in order to secure housing and utilities, with the  
 1265 balance being paid directly to the young adult until such time  
 1266 the lead agency and the young adult determine that the young  
 1267 adult can successfully manage the full amount of the assistance.

1268 2. Has remained in foster care, is attending a  
 1269 postsecondary educational institution as provided in s.  
 1270 1009.533, and is residing in a foster home or group home shall  
 1271 be made directly to the foster parent or group home provider.

1272 3. Has chosen to reside temporarily away from a licensed  
 1273 foster home or group home for purposes of attending  
 1274 postsecondary educational institution as provided in s. 1009.533  
 1275 shall be made to the community-based care lead agency in order  
 1276 to secure housing and utilities, with the balance being paid  
 1277 directly to the young adult while they temporarily reside away  
 1278 from a licensed foster home or group home for purposes of  
 1279 attending postsecondary school. When the young adult returns to  
 1280 reside in the foster home or group home, the payment will be  
 1281 paid directly to the foster parent or licensed group home.

1282 (d)1. The department must advertise the availability of  
 1283 the stipend and must provide notification of the criteria and  
 1284 application procedures for the stipend to children and young  
 1285 adults leaving, or who were formerly in, foster care;  
 1286 caregivers; case managers; guidance and family services  
 1287 counselors; principals or other relevant school administrators;  
 1288 and guardians ad litem.

1289 2. If the award recipient transfers from one eligible  
 1290 institution to another and continues to meet eligibility  
 1291 requirements, the award shall be transferred with the recipient.

1292       3. The department, or an agency under contract with the  
1293 department, shall evaluate each Road-to-Independence award for  
1294 renewal eligibility on an annual basis. In order to be eligible  
1295 for a renewal award for the subsequent year, the young adult  
1296 must:

1297       a. Be enrolled for or have completed the number of hours,  
1298 or the equivalent, to be considered a full-time student by the  
1299 eligible postsecondary educational institution in which the  
1300 young adult is enrolled, unless the young adult has a recognized  
1301 disability preventing full-time attendance.

1302       b. Maintain appropriate progress as required by the  
1303 educational institution, except that if the young adult's  
1304 progress is insufficient to renew the award at any time during  
1305 the eligibility period, the young adult may restore eligibility  
1306 by improving his or her progress to the required level.

1307       4. Funds may be terminated during the interim between an  
1308 award and the evaluation for a renewal award if the department,  
1309 or an agency under contract with the department, determines that  
1310 the award recipient is no longer enrolled in an educational  
1311 institution as described in subparagraph (a)4. or is no longer a  
1312 resident of this state.

1313       5. The department, or an agency under contract with the  
1314 department, shall notify a recipient who is terminated and  
1315 inform the recipient of his or her right to appeal.

1316       6. An award recipient who does not qualify for a renewal  
1317 award or who chooses not to renew the award may immediately  
1318 apply for reinstatement. An application for reinstatement must  
1319 be made before the young adult reaches 23 years of age, and a



1320 student may not apply for reinstatement more than once. In order  
1321 to be eligible for reinstatement, the young adult must meet the  
1322 eligibility criteria and the criteria for award renewal for the  
1323 program.

1324 (3) POSTSECONDARY EDUCATIONAL MENTORS.—

1325 (a) The department, or an agency under contract with the  
1326 department, shall ensure that former foster care young adults  
1327 attending a postsecondary educational institution have a  
1328 designated mentor.

1329 (b) A mentor is a caring, responsible adult who serves as  
1330 a positive role model and provides ongoing information,  
1331 guidance, and support to a young adult transitioning to  
1332 postsecondary education and adulthood.

1333 (c) All Road-to-Independence mentors shall be mutually  
1334 agreed upon by either the department, or an agency under  
1335 contract with the department, and the student.

1336 (d) All Road-to-Independence mentors shall submit to a  
1337 level 2 background screening that is paid for by the community-  
1338 based care lead agency in a manner that is consistent with the  
1339 screening requirements provided under s. 435.04.

1340 (e) The agencies under contract with the department shall  
1341 maintain a current listing, and make it available to the  
1342 department as needed, of assigned mentors and those young adults  
1343 that do not currently have a mentor. The agencies shall confirm  
1344 and document on at least an annual basis that a mentor is  
1345 willing to continue mentoring.

1346 (4) AFTERCARE SERVICES.—

1347 (a) Aftercare services are available to young adults who  
 1348 have chosen not to remain in foster care after reaching 18 years  
 1349 of age and who are not receiving financial assistance under  
 1350 subsection (2) to pursue postsecondary education. These  
 1351 aftercare services include, but are not limited to, the  
 1352 following:

- 1353 1. Mentoring and tutoring.
- 1354 2. Mental health services and substance abuse counseling.
- 1355 3. Life skills classes, including credit management and  
 1356 preventive health activities.
- 1357 4. Parenting classes.
- 1358 5. Job and career skills training.
- 1359 6. Counselor consultations.
- 1360 7. Temporary financial assistance for emergency  
 1361 situations.
- 1362 8. Financial literacy skills training.

1363

1364 The specific services to be provided under this paragraph shall  
 1365 be determined by an assessment of the young adult and may be  
 1366 provided by the community-based care provider or through  
 1367 referrals in the community.

1368 (b) Temporary assistance provided to prevent homelessness  
 1369 shall be provided as expeditiously as possible and within the  
 1370 limitations defined by the department.

1371 (c) A young adult who has reached 18 years of age but is  
 1372 not yet 23 years of age who leaves foster care at 18 years of  
 1373 age may request and is eligible for such services before  
 1374 reaching 23 years of age.

1375 (5) APPEAL PROCEDURE.—

1376 (a) The department shall have a procedure by which a young  
1377 adult may appeal the department's refusal to provide Road-to-  
1378 Independence Program services or support, or the termination of  
1379 such services or support if funds for such services or support  
1380 are available.

1381 (b) The appeal procedure must be readily accessible to  
1382 young adults, must provide for timely decisions, and must  
1383 provide for an appeal to the department. The decision of the  
1384 department constitutes final agency action and is reviewable by  
1385 the court as provided in s. 120.68.

1386 (6) PORTABILITY.—The services provided under this section  
1387 are portable across county lines and between lead agencies.

1388 (a) The service needs that are identified in the original  
1389 or updated transition plan, pursuant to s. 39.6035, shall be  
1390 provided by the lead agency where the young adult is currently  
1391 residing but shall be funded by the lead agency that initiated  
1392 the transition plan.

1393 (b) The lead agency with primary case management  
1394 responsibilities shall provide maintenance payments, case  
1395 planning, including a written description of all services that  
1396 will assist a child 16 years of age or older in preparing for  
1397 the transition from care to independence, and regular case  
1398 reviews that conform with all federal scheduling and content  
1399 requirements for all children in foster care who are placed or  
1400 visiting out-of-state.

1401 (7) ACCOUNTABILITY.—The department shall develop outcome  
1402 measures for the program and other performance measures in order

1403 to maintain oversight of the program. No later than January 31  
1404 of each year, the department shall prepare a report on the  
1405 outcome measures and the department's oversight activities and  
1406 submit the report to the President of the Senate, the Speaker of  
1407 the House of Representatives, and the committees with  
1408 jurisdiction over issues relating to children and families in  
1409 the Senate and the House of Representatives. The report must  
1410 include:

1411 (a) An analysis of performance on the outcome measures  
1412 developed under this section reported for each community-based  
1413 care lead agency and compared with the performance of the  
1414 department on the same measures.

1415 (b) A description of the department's oversight of the  
1416 program, including, by lead agency, any programmatic or fiscal  
1417 deficiencies found, corrective actions required, and current  
1418 status of compliance.

1419 (c) Any rules adopted or proposed under this section since  
1420 the last report. For the purposes of the first report, any rules  
1421 adopted or proposed under this section must be included.

1422 (8) INDEPENDENT LIVING SERVICES ADVISORY COUNCIL.—The  
1423 secretary shall establish the Independent Living Services  
1424 Advisory Council for the purpose of reviewing and making  
1425 recommendations concerning the implementation and operation of  
1426 the provisions of s. 39.6015 and the Road-to-Independence  
1427 Program. The advisory council shall function as specified in  
1428 this subsection until the Legislature determines that the  
1429 advisory council can no longer provide a valuable contribution

1430 to the department's efforts to achieve the goals of the services  
1431 designed to enable a young adult to live independently.

1432 (a) The advisory council shall assess the implementation  
1433 and operation of the Road-to-Independence Program and advise the  
1434 department on actions that would improve the ability of these  
1435 Road-to-Independence Program services to meet the established  
1436 goals. The advisory council shall keep the department informed  
1437 of problems being experienced with the services, barriers to the  
1438 effective and efficient integration of services and support  
1439 across systems, and successes that the system of services has  
1440 achieved. The department shall consider, but is not required to  
1441 implement, the recommendations of the advisory council.

1442 (b) The advisory council shall report to the secretary on  
1443 the status of the implementation of the Road-To-Independence  
1444 Program, efforts to publicize the availability of the Road-to-  
1445 Independence Program, the success of the services, problems  
1446 identified, recommendations for department or legislative  
1447 action, and the department's implementation of the  
1448 recommendations contained in the Independent Living Services  
1449 Integration Workgroup Report submitted to the appropriate  
1450 substantive committees of the Legislature by December 31, 2013.  
1451 The department shall submit a report by December 31 of each year  
1452 to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of  
1453 the House of Representatives which includes a summary of the  
1454 factors reported on by the advisory council and identifies the  
1455 recommendations of the advisory council and either describes the  
1456 department's actions to implement the recommendations or

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1457 provides the department's rationale for not implementing the  
1458 recommendations.

1459 (c) Members of the advisory council shall be appointed by  
1460 the secretary of the department. The membership of the advisory  
1461 council must include, at a minimum, representatives from the  
1462 headquarters and regional offices of the Department of Children  
1463 and Families, community-based care lead agencies, the Department  
1464 of Juvenile Justice, the Department of Economic Opportunity, the  
1465 Department of Education, the Agency for Health Care  
1466 Administration, the State Youth Advisory Board, Workforce  
1467 Florida, Inc., the Statewide Guardian Ad Litem Office, foster  
1468 parents, recipients of services and funding through the Road-to-  
1469 Independence Program, and advocates for children in care. The  
1470 secretary shall determine the length of the term to be served by  
1471 each member appointed to the advisory council, which may not  
1472 exceed 4 years.

1473 (d) The department shall provide administrative support to  
1474 the Independent Living Services Advisory Council to accomplish  
1475 its assigned tasks. The advisory council shall be afforded  
1476 access to all appropriate data from the department, each  
1477 community-based care lead agency, and other relevant agencies in  
1478 order to accomplish the tasks set forth in this section. The  
1479 data collected may not include any information that would  
1480 identify a specific child or young adult.

1481 (e) The advisory council report required under paragraph  
1482 (b) must include an analysis of the system of independent living  
1483 transition services for young adults who reach 18 years of age  
1484 while in foster care before completing high school or its

1485 equivalent and recommendations for department or legislative  
 1486 action. The council shall assess and report on the most  
 1487 effective method of assisting these young adults to complete  
 1488 high school or its equivalent by examining the practices of  
 1489 other states.

1490 (9) PERSONAL PROPERTY.—Property acquired on behalf of a  
 1491 young adult in this program shall become the personal property  
 1492 of the young adult and is not subject to the requirements of  
 1493 chapter 273 relating to state-owned tangible personal property.  
 1494 Such property continues to be subject to applicable federal  
 1495 laws.

1496 (10) MEDICAL ASSISTANCE FOR YOUNG ADULTS FORMERLY IN  
 1497 CARE.—The department or community-based care lead agency shall  
 1498 document that eligible young adults are enrolled in Medicaid  
 1499 under s. 409.903(4).

1500 (11) RULEMAKING.—The department shall adopt rules to  
 1501 administer this section.

1502 Section 8. Paragraph (a) of subsection (3) of section  
 1503 409.175, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

1504 409.175 Licensure of family foster homes, residential  
 1505 child-caring agencies, and child-placing agencies; public  
 1506 records exemption.—

1507 (3) (a) The total number of children placed in each family  
 1508 foster home shall be based on the recommendation of the  
 1509 department, or the community-based care lead agency where one is  
 1510 providing foster care and related services, based on the needs  
 1511 of each child in care, the ability of the foster family to meet  
 1512 the individual needs of each child, including any adoptive or

1513 | biological children or young adults remaining in foster care  
 1514 | living in the home, the amount of safe physical plant space, the  
 1515 | ratio of active and appropriate adult supervision, and the  
 1516 | background, experience, and skill of the family foster parents.

1517 | Section 9. Subsection (4) of section 409.903, Florida  
 1518 | Statutes, is amended to read:

1519 | 409.903 Mandatory payments for eligible persons.—The  
 1520 | agency shall make payments for medical assistance and related  
 1521 | services on behalf of the following persons who the department,  
 1522 | or the Social Security Administration by contract with the  
 1523 | Department of Children and Family Services, determines to be  
 1524 | eligible, subject to the income, assets, and categorical  
 1525 | eligibility tests set forth in federal and state law. Payment on  
 1526 | behalf of these Medicaid eligible persons is subject to the  
 1527 | availability of moneys and any limitations established by the  
 1528 | General Appropriations Act or chapter 216.

1529 | (4) A child who is eligible under Title IV-E of the Social  
 1530 | Security Act for subsidized board payments, foster care, or  
 1531 | adoption subsidies, and a child for whom the state has assumed  
 1532 | temporary or permanent responsibility and who does not qualify  
 1533 | for Title IV-E assistance but is in foster care, shelter or  
 1534 | emergency shelter care, or subsidized adoption. This category  
 1535 | includes a young adult who is eligible to receive services under  
 1536 | s. 409.1451~~(5)~~, until the young adult reaches 21 years of age,  
 1537 | without regard to any income, resource, or categorical  
 1538 | eligibility test that is otherwise required. This category also  
 1539 | includes a person who as a child was eligible under Title IV-E  
 1540 | of the Social Security Act for foster care or the state-provided



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1541 foster care and who is a participant in the Road-to-Independence  
1542 Program.

1543 Section 10. (1) The Department of Children and Families  
1544 shall acquire, through the use of existing independent living  
1545 services funding and via contract, postsecondary educational  
1546 campus coaching positions. These positions shall be integrated  
1547 into state colleges' and university institutions' general  
1548 support services structure to provide former foster care youth  
1549 with dedicated, on-campus support to aid these youth in  
1550 transitioning from foster care toward graduation. The number and  
1551 distribution of these positions shall be determined by the  
1552 department based on the availability of funds and overall need,  
1553 as determined by the number of former foster care youth  
1554 attending postsecondary educational institutions receiving Road-  
1555 to-Independence education tuition waivers within a given  
1556 community.

1557 (2) The existing independent living services funding shall  
1558 also provide for a network coordinator, who shall be responsible  
1559 for overseeing startup, implementation, and evaluation of the  
1560 support program described in subsection (1). The network  
1561 coordinator's position shall be a state full-time equivalent  
1562 position.

1563 Section 11. Effective October 1, 2013, a child or young  
1564 adult who is a participant in the Road-to-Independence Program  
1565 may continue in the program as it exists through December 31,  
1566 2013. Effective January 1, 2014, a child or young adult who is a  
1567 participant in the program shall transfer to the program  
1568 services provided in this act, and his or her monthly stipend

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1569 may not be reduced, the method of payment of the monthly stipend  
1570 may not be changed, and the young adult may not be required to  
1571 change his or her living arrangement. These conditions shall  
1572 remain in effect for a child or young adult until he or she  
1573 ceases to meet the eligibility requirements under which he or  
1574 she entered the Road-to-Independence Program. A child or young  
1575 adult applying or reapplying for the Road-to-Independence  
1576 Program on or after October 1, 2013, may apply for program  
1577 services only as provided in this act.

1578       Section 12. The cost of foster care payments for children  
1579 in foster care from age 18 until age 21, and the cost of  
1580 independent living services for those qualified former foster  
1581 care children until the age of 23, shall be paid from a special  
1582 category established for that purpose in the General  
1583 Appropriations Act. The amount and fund source in this special  
1584 category will be set each year by the Legislature.

1585       Section 13. This act shall take effect October 1, 2013.  
1586