

A bill for an act

relating to children; requiring a plan to improve child well-being; modifying requirements of the annual child maltreatment report; amending Minnesota Statutes 2010, section 257.0725.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA:

Section 1. **CHILD WELL-BEING.**

Subdivision. 1. **Legislative findings.** Research has determined that children who are alleged to be maltreated are among those most at risk of experiencing substantial delays in their cognitive, physical, emotional, and social development with negative long-term consequences for their health, economic, and social well-being in adulthood. Early intervention and other services, as well as improved family well-being, can significantly improve outcomes for these children. To ensure children obtain effective services to improve their well-being in childhood and adulthood, the legislature finds that better information is needed to plan, monitor, and assess efforts at both the child and family level and at the state, county, and tribal level.

Subd. 2. **Instruction to the commissioners; report.** (a) The commissioners of human services, education, health, and corrections shall submit a joint report to the governor and the legislature by March 15, 2012, on a plan to improve children's well-being in the child welfare system by enhancing information used for planning and evaluation at the individual child level and at the state, county, and tribal levels. The report shall address well-being information for children for whom a report of maltreatment was accepted, including both family assessment and traditional investigation referrals, regardless of whether the maltreatment allegation was substantiated. In preparing their recommendations, the commissioners must consult with representatives of the judicial

system, county child protection caseworkers, children's advocates, and researchers with experience using multiple data sources to examine child well-being outcomes. The report shall address issues of feasibility and cost, including training and systems changes that can be accomplished within existing resources.

(b) The report must address individual child well-being. The report must include recommendations to improve data sharing between the agencies and to improve the quality and quantity of information used in child welfare investigation and family assessments, case planning, and service planning and provided to the courts for permanency and other child placement decisions. The report must recommend information system components that ensure appropriate screenings and examinations have occurred and, if indicated, referrals for additional assessment and services. The system must also indicate whether children are receiving recommended services, and the outcomes of any services. This includes, but is not limited to, physical and mental health, education, including early intervention and early education services, and services provided to families to address their child's well-being.

(c) The report must address aggregated well-being information. The report must include recommendations on ways to improve state, county, and tribal level information on child well-being and monitor performance toward achieving positive outcomes for children and families including, but not limited to, those required in the federal Child and Family Services Review:

(1) the proportion of children reported for maltreatment who have received appropriate developmental screenings are enrolled in and receiving early intervention services or other early childhood programs, children's mental health services, child care, or other services intended to improve their readiness for school;

(2) indicators of educational achievement including school attendance, proportion meeting or exceeding standards in the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment tests, and the proportion graduating from high school on time and the proportion graduating but not on time;

(3) results by race, geography, and other demographic information necessary to determine if services and child outcomes vary according to race, geography, or other issues not specific to individual children;

(4) results by response category;

(5) ways to efficiently aggregate information collected at the case level for state reports and incorporate into state budget documents and other state planning efforts;

(6) issues in staff training, data privacy, and systems planning necessary to coordinate and link data across state agencies to provide information required in this section; and

(7) other data that may be necessary to determine and improve the well-being of children involved in child welfare.

Subd. 3. Annual report on child well-being. Beginning January 1, 2013, the commissioner of human services shall issue a biennial report to the governor and the legislature containing the aggregated well-being data listed in subdivision 2, paragraph (c). The commissioner shall post the report on the department's website.

Sec. 2. Minnesota Statutes 2010, section 257.0725, is amended to read:

257.0725 ANNUAL REPORT.

The commissioner of human services shall publish an annual report on child maltreatment and on children in out-of-home placement. The commissioner shall confer with counties, child welfare organizations, child advocacy organizations, the courts, and other groups on how to improve the content and utility of the department's annual report. In regard to child maltreatment, the report shall include the total number of calls or reports of alleged child maltreatment made to county child protection offices, the number and kinds of maltreatment reports received, and any other data that the commissioner determines is appropriate to include in a report on child maltreatment. In regard to children in out-of-home placement, the report shall include, by county and statewide, information on legal status, living arrangement, age, sex, race, accumulated length of time in placement, reason for most recent placement, race of family with whom placed, and other information deemed appropriate on all children in out-of-home placement. Out-of-home placement includes placement in any facility by an authorized child-placing agency.