

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 52

BY SENATORS MIZELL, ABRAHAM, ALLAIN, BARROW, BERNARD, BOUDREAUX, BOUIE, CARTER, CATHEY, CLOUD, CORTEZ, FESI, FIELDS, FOIL, HARRIS, HENRY, HENSGENS, HEWITT, JACKSON, JOHNS, LAMBERT, LUNEAU, MCMATH, MILLIGAN, FRED MILLS, MORRIS, PEACOCK, POPE, PRICE, REESE, SMITH, TALBOT, TARVER, WARD, WHITE AND WOMACK

A RESOLUTION

To urge and request the Department of Children and Family Services to report to the Senate Committee on Health and Welfare on the impact and success of the department's guidelines on care setting decision making for children under age six.

WHEREAS, the Department of Children and Family Services is responsible for the development and providing of social services and the improvement of social conditions for the citizens of Louisiana and has a stated mission to keep children safe, help individuals and families become self-sufficient, and provide safe refuge during disasters; and

WHEREAS, in accordance with Children's Code Article 672, the department has the responsibility for the safe and appropriate placement of children judicially committed to its custody; and

WHEREAS, the department adopted Document 6-305, entitled Guidelines for Care Setting Decision Making for Children under Age Six, with an effective date of March 15, 2019; and

WHEREAS, the guidelines state that it is the policy of the Department of Children and Family Services to place children under age six in a setting with relatives or family connections immediately upon or as soon as possible after foster care entry with an appropriate and safe relative or family connection once identified; and

WHEREAS, the guidelines also provide that due to the essential bonding which occurs for very young children in the child's care setting, the department prioritizes all efforts to minimize moves for these very young children.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby urge and request the Department of Children and Family Services to report to the Senate Committee on Health and Welfare on the impact and success of the department's guidelines on care setting decision making for children under age six.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the department shall address all of the following with regard to Document 6-305, entitled Guidelines for Care Setting Decision Making for Children under Age Six, with an effective date of March 15, 2019, in the report requested by this Resolution:

- (1)(a) How many children under the age of six years were moved after a minimum of six to eight months in placement since March 15, 2019, and for what reason?
- (b) In how many of those cases were mental health professionals consulted and what did they recommend?
- (c) What evidence can the department provide about the proportion of cases in which the stability of placement was weighed more than biological relationships and the proportion of cases in which biological relationships were weighed more than the stability of placement?
- (2) How does the department train its employees with regard to application of the guidelines?
- (3) How many families and children have been impacted by the implementation of the guidelines and what were the outcomes?
- (4) Does the department universally support and operate pursuant to the guidelines and in what circumstances will the department vary from the guidelines?

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the department shall not be required to provide any confidential, personally identifiable, or otherwise sensitive information in the report submitted pursuant to this Resolution.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the department shall submit the report requested by this Resolution no later than October 1, 2020.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution shall be transmitted to the secretary of the Department of Children and Family Services.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE