
OLR Bill Analysis**HB 6336*****AN ACT CONCERNING KINSHIP CARE.*****SUMMARY:**

This bill:

1. removes the requirement that the Department of Children and Families (DCF) place a child in foster care with a relative only if the child has a separate bedroom;
2. requires DCF to report to the Superior Court, rather than simply make a determination on the appropriateness of a placement, when the court has identified a relative who might serve as a child's foster parent or temporary custodian; and
3. requires the DCF commissioner to convene a working group to determine how to maximize kinship care for children in the department's care and custody.

Under the bill, DCF must not require a relative to maintain a separate bedroom for the child, as long as the placement is otherwise in the child's best interest.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2011, except for the working group provision, which is effective upon passage.

REPORT TO THE COURT

By law, the Superior Court must do a number of things at a preliminary hearing on a temporary custody order, order to appear, or the first hearing on a petition regarding a neglected, uncared for, or dependent child or youth. Among them is to identify any relative, related either by blood or marriage, living in the state who might serve as a licensed foster parent or temporary custodian and order the DCF commissioner to investigate the appropriateness of placing a child

with such a relative. The bill requires the commissioner to report back to the court within 30 days of the hearing, rather than simply make a determination on the matter within that timeframe.

KINSHIP CARE WORKING GROUP

By October 1, 2011, the DCF commissioner must convene a working group to examine DCF practices and policies that impact kinship care and report by January 1, 2012 to the Human Services Committee and Select Committee on Children. Using existing resources, the group must consider agency regulations, cultural competence in recruiting relative homes, outreach practices, and family conferencing. Its report must summarize existing policies and practices impacting kinship care, and propose recommendations for increasing it.

BACKGROUND

Children's Bedroom Regulations

Under current DCF regulations, no child over age two is permitted to share a bedroom with another child of the opposite sex or with one of the same sex who is a disparate age. No child over the age of one can share a room with an adult without the department's permission (Conn. Agency Reg. § 17-145-139(a)(6)).

COMMITTEE ACTION

Select Committee on Children

Joint Favorable

Yea 12 Nay 0 (03/03/2011)

Human Services Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 18 Nay 0 (03/22/2011)