

OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH
PUBLIC ACT SUMMARY



PA 11-116—sHB 6336

Select Committee on Children

Human Services Committee

Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee

AN ACT CONCERNING KINSHIP CARE

SUMMARY: This act authorizes the Department of Children and Families (DCF) commissioner to waive any standard for separate bedrooms and room-sharing arrangements (see BACKGROUND) when placing a child in foster care with an unlicensed relative if doing so is in the child's best interest. The law, unchanged by the act, bars the commissioner from waiving any standard or procedure related to safety.

The act also requires DCF to (1) 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 (2) convene a working group to determine how to maximize kinship care for children in the department's care and custody.

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 relation, 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 act requires the commissioner to report to the court within 30 days of the hearing, rather than simply make a determination on the matter within that time.

KINSHIP CARE WORKING GROUP

By October 1, 2011, the DCF commissioner must convene a working group to examine DCF practices and policies that affect kinship care. Using existing resources, the group must consider agency regulations, cultural competence in recruiting relative homes, outreach practices, and family conferencing. The group must submit a report by January 1, 2012 to the Human Services and Children's committees summarizing existing policies and practices affecting kinship care, and recommending ways to increase such care.

BACKGROUND

OLR PUBLIC ACT SUMMARY

Children's Bedroom Regulations

DCF regulations bar a child age three or older from sharing a bedroom with (1) another child of the opposite sex or (2) one of the same sex who is a disparate age. No child over age one can share a room with an adult without the department's permission (Conn. Agencies Reg. § 17-145-139(a)(6)).

OLR Tracking: RO:JR:JL:ts