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A bill to be entitled An act relating to child welfare; amending s. 39.01, F.S.; providing a definition; conforming crossreferences; amending s. 39.522, F.S.; providing factors a court must consider when determining whether a child should remain in his or her own home or be placed in out-of-home care; amending s. 39.6011, F.S.; requiring certain parties to a case plan to communicate effectively; requiring the court to be notified if ineffective communication takes place; amending s. 39.701, F.S.; requiring a foster parent or legal custodian to disclose to the court any communication not in compliance with the case plan; providing for agency and caregiver recommendations for a change in visitation; requiring a court and citizen review panel to determine whether certain parties communicate effectively; providing factors a court must consider when determining whether a child should be returned to the custody of his or her parents; amending s. 409.988, F.S.; authorizing a lead agency to provide more than 35 percent of all child welfare services under certain conditions; requiring a certain group to review a request for an exemption from the services threshold; providing membership requirements for the group; amending ss. 39.302, 39.521, 39.6012,

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322.09, 394.495, 627.746, 934.255, and 960.065, F.S.; conforming cross-references; providing an effective date.

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

Section 1. Subsections (20) through (87) of section 39.01, Florida Statutes, are renumbered as subsections (21) through (88) respectively, subsection (10) and present subsection (37) are amended, and a new subsection (20) is added to that section, to read:

- 39.01 Definitions.—When used in this chapter, unless the context otherwise requires:
- (10) "Caregiver" means the parent, legal custodian, permanent guardian, adult household member, or other person responsible for a child's welfare as defined in <a href="this section">this section</a> subsection (54).
- (20) "Conditions for return" means the minimum conditions that must exist with respect to a specific family's circumstances, including, but not limited by, the home environment, behavior, and safety resources, to allow for reunification to occur with the use of an in-home safety plan.
- (38) (37) "Institutional child abuse or neglect" means situations of known or suspected child abuse or neglect in which the person allegedly perpetrating the child abuse or neglect is

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an employee of a private school, public or private day care center, residential home, institution, facility, or agency or any other person at such institution responsible for the child's care as defined in this section subsection (54).

- Section 2. Subsection (3) of section 39.522, Florida Statutes, is renumbered as subsection (4), and a new subsection (3) is added to that section to read:
- 39.522 Postdisposition change of custody.—The court may change the temporary legal custody or the conditions of protective supervision at a postdisposition hearing, without the necessity of another adjudicatory hearing.
- (3) In cases where the issue before the court is whether a child who has remained in his or her own home with an in-home safety plan, or who has been reunited with a parent with an in-home safety plan, should remain in that placement or should be placed in out-of-home care, the court shall place the child in out-of-home care if the parent is unlikely, within a reasonable amount of time, to achieve the full protective capacities needed for the child to be reunified without an in-home safety plan and for the court to end protective supervision without endangering the child's safety, well-being, and physical, mental, and emotional health. In making its determination, the court shall consider all of the following:
- (a) The circumstances that caused the child's dependency and other issues subsequently identified.

76	(b) The length of time the child has been placed in his or
77	her own home with an in-home safety plan.
78	(c) The parent's current level of protective capacities.
79	(d) The increase in the parent's demonstrated level of
80	protective capacities since the child's placement in his or her
81	own home given the length of time the child has been placed
82	there.
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84	The court shall also evaluate the child's permanency goal and
85	shall change the permanency goal if doing so would be in the
86	best interest of the child.
87	Section 3. Paragraphs (b) through (d) of subsection (4)
88	are redesignated as paragraphs (c) through and (e),
89	respectively, and a new paragraph (b) is added to subsection (4)
90	of that section to read:
91	39.6011 Case plan development.—
92	(4) The case plan must describe:
93	(b) The responsibility of the parents and caregivers to
94	communicate effectively, which includes, but is not limited to,
95	refraining from harassing communication, to promote the safety,
96	well-being, and physical, mental, and emotional health of the
97	child. A parent or caregiver shall notify the court if
98	ineffective communication takes place;
99	Section 4. Paragraphs (a), (c), and (d) of subsection (2)
100	of section 39.701, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

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101 39.701 Judicial review.

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- (2) REVIEW HEARINGS FOR CHILDREN YOUNGER THAN 18 YEARS OF AGE.—
- (a) Social study report for judicial review.—Before every judicial review hearing or citizen review panel hearing, the social service agency shall make an investigation and social study concerning all pertinent details relating to the child and shall furnish to the court or citizen review panel a written report that includes, but is not limited to:
- 1. A description of the type of placement the child is in at the time of the hearing, including the safety of the child and the continuing necessity for and appropriateness of the placement.
- 2. Documentation of the diligent efforts made by all parties to the case plan to comply with each applicable provision of the plan.
- 3. The amount of fees assessed and collected during the period of time being reported.
- 4. The services provided to the foster family or legal custodian in an effort to address the needs of the child as indicated in the case plan.
  - 5. A statement that either:
- a. The parent, though able to do so, did not comply substantially with the case plan, and the agency recommendations;

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

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- c. The parent has partially complied with the case plan, with a summary of additional progress needed and the agency recommendations.
- 6. A statement from the foster parent or legal custodian providing any material evidence concerning the return of the child to the parent or parents, including, but not limited to, any communication that is not in compliance with the case plan.
- 7. A statement concerning the frequency, duration, and results of the parent-child visitation, if any, and the agency and caregiver recommendations for an expansion or restriction of future visitation.
- 8. The number of times a child has been removed from his or her home and placed elsewhere, the number and types of placements that have occurred, and the reason for the changes in placement.
- 9. The number of times a child's educational placement has been changed, the number and types of educational placements which have occurred, and the reason for any change in placement.
- 10. If the child has reached 13 years of age but is not yet 18 years of age, a statement from the caregiver on the progress the child has made in acquiring independent living skills.
  - 11. Copies of all medical, psychological, and educational

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records that support the terms of the case plan and that have been produced concerning the parents or any caregiver since the last judicial review hearing.

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- 12. Copies of the child's current health, mental health, and education records as identified in s. 39.6012.
- Review determinations.—The court and any citizen review panel shall take into consideration the information contained in the social services study and investigation and all medical, psychological, and educational records that support the terms of the case plan; testimony by the social services agency, the parent, the foster parent or legal custodian, the guardian ad litem or surrogate parent for educational decisionmaking if one has been appointed for the child, and any other person deemed appropriate; and any relevant and material evidence submitted to the court, including written and oral reports to the extent of their probative value. These reports and evidence may be received by the court in its effort to determine the action to be taken with regard to the child and may be relied upon to the extent of their probative value, even though not competent in an adjudicatory hearing. In its deliberations, the court and any citizen review panel shall seek to determine:
- 1. If the parent was advised of the right to receive assistance from any person or social service agency in the preparation of the case plan.
  - 2. If the parent has been advised of the right to have

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counsel present at the judicial review or citizen review hearings. If not so advised, the court or citizen review panel shall advise the parent of such right.

- 3. If a guardian ad litem needs to be appointed for the child in a case in which a guardian ad litem has not previously been appointed or if there is a need to continue a guardian ad litem in a case in which a guardian ad litem has been appointed.
- 4. Who holds the rights to make educational decisions for the child. If appropriate, the court may refer the child to the district school superintendent for appointment of a surrogate parent or may itself appoint a surrogate parent under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and s. 39.0016.
- 5. The compliance or lack of compliance of all parties with applicable items of the case plan, including the parents' compliance with child support orders.
- 6. The compliance or lack of compliance with a visitation contract between the parent and the social service agency for contact with the child, including the frequency, duration, and results of the parent-child visitation and the reason for any noncompliance.
- 7. The frequency, kind, and duration of contacts among siblings who have been separated during placement, as well as any efforts undertaken to reunite separated siblings if doing so is in the best interest of the child.
  - 8. The compliance or lack of compliance of the parent in

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meeting specified financial obligations pertaining to the care of the child, including the reason for failure to comply, if applicable.

- 9. Whether the child is receiving safe and proper care according to s. 39.6012, including, but not limited to, the appropriateness of the child's current placement, including whether the child is in a setting that is as family-like and as close to the parent's home as possible, consistent with the child's best interests and special needs, and including maintaining stability in the child's educational placement, as documented by assurances from the community-based care provider that:
- a. The placement of the child takes into account the appropriateness of the current educational setting and the proximity to the school in which the child is enrolled at the time of placement.
- b. The community-based care agency has coordinated with appropriate local educational agencies to ensure that the child remains in the school in which the child is enrolled at the time of placement.
- 10. A projected date likely for the child's return home or other permanent placement.
- 11. When appropriate, the basis for the unwillingness or inability of the parent to become a party to a case plan. The court and the citizen review panel shall determine if the

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efforts of the social service agency to secure party participation in a case plan were sufficient.

- 12. For a child who has reached 13 years of age but is not yet 18 years of age, the adequacy of the child's preparation for adulthood and independent living. For a child who is 15 years of age or older, the court shall determine if appropriate steps are being taken for the child to obtain a driver license or learner's driver license.
- 13. If amendments to the case plan are required.

  Amendments to the case plan must be made under s. 39.6013.
- 14. Whether the parent and caregiver communicate effectively to promote the safety, well-being, and physical, mental, and emotional health of the child, which includes, but is not limited to, refraining from harassing communication.
  - (d) Orders.-

1. Based upon the criteria set forth in paragraph (c) and the recommended order of the citizen review panel, if any, the court shall determine whether or not the social service agency shall initiate proceedings to have a child declared a dependent child, return the child to the parent, continue the child in out-of-home care for a specified period of time, or initiate termination of parental rights proceedings for subsequent placement in an adoptive home. Amendments to the case plan must be prepared as prescribed in s. 39.6013. If the court finds that the prevention or reunification efforts of the department will

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allow the child to remain safely at home or be safely returned to the home, the court shall allow the child to remain in or return to the home after making a specific finding of fact that the reasons for the creation of the case plan have been remedied to the extent that the child's safety, well-being, and physical, mental, and emotional health will not be endangered.

- 2. The court shall return the child to the custody of the parents at any time it determines that evidence has been provided that either conditions for return have been met and an in-home safety plan can be implemented or a parent has they have substantially complied with the case plan and is likely to complete the case plan in a reasonable amount of time, and if the court is satisfied that reunification will not be detrimental to the child's safety, well-being, and physical, mental, and emotional health.
- 3. If, in the opinion of the court, the social service agency has not complied with its obligations as specified in the written case plan, the court may find the social service agency in contempt, shall order the social service agency to submit its plans for compliance with the agreement, and shall require the social service agency to show why the child could not safely be returned to the home of the parents.
- 4. If, at any judicial review, the court finds that the parents have failed to substantially comply with the case plan to the degree that further reunification efforts are without

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merit and not in the best interest of the child, on its own motion, the court may order the filing of a petition for termination of parental rights, whether or not the time period as contained in the case plan for substantial compliance has expired.

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5. Within 6 months after the date that the child was placed in shelter care, the court shall conduct a judicial review hearing to review the child's permanency goal as identified in the case plan. At the hearing the court shall make findings regarding the likelihood of the child's reunification with the parent or legal custodian. In making such findings, the court shall consider the level of the parent or legal custodian's compliance with the case plan and demonstrated change in protective capacities compared to that necessary to achieve timely reunification within 12 months after the removal of the child from the home. The court shall also consider the frequency, duration, manner, and level of engagement of the parent or legal custodian's visitation with the child in compliance with the case plan. If the court makes a written finding that it is not likely that the child will be reunified with the parent or legal custodian within 12 months after the child was removed from the home, the department must file with the court, and serve on all parties, a motion to amend the case plan under s. 39.6013 and declare that it will use concurrent planning for the case plan. The department must file the motion

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within 10 business days after receiving the written finding of the court. The department must attach the proposed amended case plan to the motion. If concurrent planning is already being used, the case plan must document the efforts the department is taking to complete the concurrent goal.

- 6. The court may issue a protective order in assistance, or as a condition, of any other order made under this part. In addition to the requirements included in the case plan, the protective order may set forth requirements relating to reasonable conditions of behavior to be observed for a specified period of time by a person or agency who is before the court; and the order may require any person or agency to make periodic reports to the court containing such information as the court in its discretion may prescribe.
- Section 5. Paragraph (j) of subsection (1) of section 409.988, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:
  - 409.988 Lead agency duties; general provisions.-
  - (1) DUTIES.—A lead agency:

 (j) May subcontract for the provision of services required by the contract with the lead agency and the department; however, the subcontracts must specify how the provider will contribute to the lead agency meeting the performance standards established pursuant to the child welfare results-oriented accountability system required by s. 409.997. The lead agency shall directly provide no more than 35 percent of all child

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326	welfare services provided unless it can demonstrate a need,
327	within the lead agency's geographic service area, to exceed this
328	threshold. The justification for need shall be reviewed by a
329	group comprised of the local community alliance, a
330	representative from another lead agency, and a representative
331	from a child welfare service provider from another geographic
332	area. The group shall recommend to the department whether the
333	department should approve or deny the request for an exemption
334	from the services threshold. If there is not a community
335	alliance operating in a lead agency's geographic service area,
336	the recommendation for approval or denial of the exemption shall
337	be made by representatives of local stakeholders, including at
338	least one representative from each of the following:
339	1. The department.
340	2. The county government.
341	3. The school district.
342	4. The county United Way.
343	5. The county sheriff's office.
344	6. The circuit court corresponding to the county.
345	7. The county children's board, if one exists.
346	8. Another lead agency.
347	9. A child welfare service provider from another
348	geographic service area.
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350	If a lead agency's geographic service area has more than one

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community alliance, county government, school district, United Way, sheriff, circuit court, or county children's board, the chair of each community alliance, county commission, school board, United Way, or county children's board or the sheriff or chief judge of the circuit court corresponding to each county in the geographic service area shall select one person to serve as the representative of such local stakeholder. Such persons shall comprise the group that must recommend to the department whether the department should approve or deny the request for exemption from the services threshold. There must be representation in the group from every county in the lead agency's geographic service area, including counties that do not have a community alliance. The department may adopt rules to administer this paragraph. Section 6. Subsection (1) of section 39.302, Florida Statutes, is amended to read: 39.302 Protective investigations of institutional child abuse, abandonment, or neglect.-The department shall conduct a child protective investigation of each report of institutional child abuse, abandonment, or neglect. Upon receipt of a report that alleges that an employee or agent of the department, or any other entity or person covered by s. 39.01 s. 39.01(37) or (54), acting in an official capacity, has committed an act of child abuse,

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abandonment, or neglect, the department shall initiate a child

protective investigation within the timeframe established under

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s. 39.201(5) and notify the appropriate state attorney, law enforcement agency, and licensing agency, which shall immediately conduct a joint investigation, unless independent investigations are more feasible. When conducting investigations or having face-to-face interviews with the child, investigation visits shall be unannounced unless it is determined by the department or its agent that unannounced visits threaten the safety of the child. If a facility is exempt from licensing, the department shall inform the owner or operator of the facility of the report. Each agency conducting a joint investigation is entitled to full access to the information gathered by the department in the course of the investigation. A protective investigation must include an interview with the child's parent or legal quardian. The department shall make a full written report to the state attorney within 3 working days after making the oral report. A criminal investigation shall be coordinated, whenever possible, with the child protective investigation of the department. Any interested person who has information regarding the offenses described in this subsection may forward a statement to the state attorney as to whether prosecution is warranted and appropriate. Within 15 days after the completion of the investigation, the state attorney shall report the findings to the department and shall include in the report a determination of whether or not prosecution is justified and appropriate in view of the circumstances of the specific case.

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Section 7. Paragraph (c) of subsection (1) of section 39.521, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

- 39.521 Disposition hearings; powers of disposition.-
- (1) A disposition hearing shall be conducted by the court, if the court finds that the facts alleged in the petition for dependency were proven in the adjudicatory hearing, or if the parents or legal custodians have consented to the finding of dependency or admitted the allegations in the petition, have failed to appear for the arraignment hearing after proper notice, or have not been located despite a diligent search having been conducted.
- (c) When any child is adjudicated by a court to be dependent, the court having jurisdiction of the child has the power by order to:
- 1. Require the parent and, when appropriate, the legal guardian or the child to participate in treatment and services identified as necessary. The court may require the person who has custody or who is requesting custody of the child to submit to a mental health or substance abuse disorder assessment or evaluation. The order may be made only upon good cause shown and pursuant to notice and procedural requirements provided under the Florida Rules of Juvenile Procedure. The mental health assessment or evaluation must be administered by a qualified professional as defined in s. 39.01, and the substance abuse assessment or evaluation must be administered by a qualified

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professional as defined in s. 397.311. The court may also require such person to participate in and comply with treatment and services identified as necessary, including, when appropriate and available, participation in and compliance with a mental health court program established under chapter 394 or a treatment-based drug court program established under s. 397.334. Adjudication of a child as dependent based upon evidence of harm as defined in s. 39.01 s. 39.01(35)(g) demonstrates good cause, and the court shall require the parent whose actions caused the harm to submit to a substance abuse disorder assessment or evaluation and to participate and comply with treatment and services identified in the assessment or evaluation as being necessary. In addition to supervision by the department, the court, including the mental health court program or the treatment-based drug court program, may oversee the progress and compliance with treatment by a person who has custody or is requesting custody of the child. The court may impose appropriate available sanctions for noncompliance upon a person who has custody or is requesting custody of the child or make a finding of noncompliance for consideration in determining whether an alternative placement of the child is in the child's best interests. Any order entered under this subparagraph may be made only upon good cause shown. This subparagraph does not authorize placement of a child with a person seeking custody of the child, other than the child's parent or legal custodian, who

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requires mental health or substance abuse disorder treatment.

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- 2. Require, if the court deems necessary, the parties to participate in dependency mediation.
- Require placement of the child either under the protective supervision of an authorized agent of the department in the home of one or both of the child's parents or in the home of a relative of the child or another adult approved by the court, or in the custody of the department. Protective supervision continues until the court terminates it or until the child reaches the age of 18, whichever date is first. Protective supervision shall be terminated by the court whenever the court determines that permanency has been achieved for the child, whether with a parent, another relative, or a legal custodian, and that protective supervision is no longer needed. The termination of supervision may be with or without retaining jurisdiction, at the court's discretion, and shall in either case be considered a permanency option for the child. The order terminating supervision by the department must set forth the powers of the custodian of the child and include the powers ordinarily granted to a guardian of the person of a minor unless otherwise specified. Upon the court's termination of supervision by the department, further judicial reviews are not required if permanency has been established for the child.
- 4. Determine whether the child has a strong attachment to the prospective permanent guardian and whether such guardian has

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476 a strong commitment to permanently caring for the child.

Section 8. Paragraph (c) of subsection (1) of section 39.6012, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

39.6012 Case plan tasks; services.-

- (1) The services to be provided to the parent and the tasks that must be completed are subject to the following:
- (c) If there is evidence of harm as defined in  $\underline{s. 39.01}$   $\underline{s. 39.01}$   $\underline{s. 39.01(35)(g)}$ , the case plan must include as a required task for the parent whose actions caused the harm that the parent submit to a substance abuse disorder assessment or evaluation and participate and comply with treatment and services identified in the assessment or evaluation as being necessary.
- Section 9. Subsection (4) of section 322.09, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:
- 322.09 Application of minors; responsibility for negligence or misconduct of minor.—
- (4) Notwithstanding subsections (1) and (2), if a caregiver of a minor who is under the age of 18 years and is in out-of-home care as defined in s. 39.01 s. 39.01(49), an authorized representative of a residential group home at which such a minor resides, the caseworker at the agency at which the state has placed the minor, or a guardian ad litem specifically authorized by the minor's caregiver to sign for a learner's driver license signs the minor's application for a learner's driver license, that caregiver, group home representative,

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caseworker, or guardian ad litem does not assume any obligation or become liable for any damages caused by the negligence or willful misconduct of the minor by reason of having signed the application. Before signing the application, the caseworker, authorized group home representative, or guardian ad litem shall notify the caregiver or other responsible party of his or her intent to sign and verify the application.

Section 10. Paragraph (p) of subsection (4) of section 394.495, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

394.495 Child and adolescent mental health system of care; programs and services.—

- (4) The array of services may include, but is not limited to:
- (p) Trauma-informed services for children who have suffered sexual exploitation as defined in  $\underline{s. 39.01} \ \underline{s.} 39.01 \ (77) \ (g)$ .

Section 11. Section 627.746, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

627.746 Coverage for minors who have a learner's driver license; additional premium prohibited.—An insurer that issues an insurance policy on a private passenger motor vehicle to a named insured who is a caregiver of a minor who is under the age of 18 years and is in out-of-home care as defined in  $\underline{s. 39.01} \ \underline{s.} 39.01 \ \underline{(49)} \ may$  not charge an additional premium for coverage of the minor while the minor is operating the insured vehicle, for

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526	the period of time that the minor has a learner's driver
527	license, until such time as the minor obtains a driver license.
528	Section 12. Paragraph (c) of subsection (1) of section
529	934.255, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:
530	934.255 Subpoenas in investigations of sexual offenses.—
531	(1) As used in this section, the term:
532	(c) "Sexual abuse of a child" means a criminal offense
533	based on any conduct described in $s. 39.01 s. 39.01(71)$ .
534	Section 13. Subsection (5) of section 960.065, Florida
535	Statutes, is amended to read:
536	960.065 Eligibility for awards.—
537	(5) A person is not ineligible for an award pursuant to
538	paragraph (2)(a), paragraph (2)(b), or paragraph (2)(c) if that
539	person is a victim of sexual exploitation of a child as defined
540	in <u>s. 39.01</u> <del>s. 39.01(77)(g)</del> .
541	Section 14. This act shall take effect October 1, 2019.

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