

**E2SHB 3145** - S COMM AMD

By Committee on Human Services & Corrections

**ADOPTED 3/06/2008**

1 Strike everything after the enacting clause and insert the  
2 following:

3 "NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature recognizes that the work  
4 done by the work group convened under chapter 413, Laws of 2007 was an  
5 initial step in developing a specialized foster home program. The  
6 legislature finds that the department should build upon this initial  
7 work and continue to work with stakeholders to put together specific  
8 recommendations on the qualifications and training specialized foster  
9 parents will need, the criteria by which eligible high/special needs  
10 foster children will be selected and the cost of implementing this  
11 program statewide. The legislature also finds that the department  
12 should consider whether it is more appropriate that this specialized  
13 group of providers be designated as something other than foster  
14 parents. The legislature intends that the department, in developing  
15 this plan, consider that the specialized foster home program is a  
16 potential collective bargaining unit.

17 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** (1) The department shall develop a specific  
18 plan to create a specialized foster home program.

19 (2) In developing this plan, the department shall use the  
20 information gathered by the work group convened under chapter 413, Laws  
21 of 2007, and shall actively:

22 (a) Seek recommendations from foster parents and other out-of-home  
23 service providers across the state regarding the qualifications and  
24 requirements of specialized foster home providers, the needs of the  
25 children to be served, and the desired outcomes to be measured or  
26 monitored; and

27 (b) Consult with experts in child welfare, children's mental  
28 health, and children's health care to identify the evidence-based or  
29 promising practice models to be employed in the program and the  
30 appropriate supports to ensure program fidelity, including, but not  
31 limited to, the necessary training and clinical consultation and  
32 oversight to be provided to specialized foster homes.

1 (3) The plan developed by the department under this section shall  
2 include:

3 (a) The criteria by which specialized foster home providers shall  
4 be chosen. The criteria shall include at a minimum that the foster  
5 parent be licensed by the department as a foster parent, and shall meet  
6 additional requirements relating to relevant experience, education,  
7 training, and professional expertise necessary to meet the high/special  
8 needs of children identified as eligible for this program;

9 (b) The criteria by which children with high/special needs are  
10 deemed eligible for placement with a specialized foster home provider.  
11 Such criteria shall be based on the best interests of the child and  
12 shall include an assessment of the child's past and current level of  
13 functioning, including exposure to parental substance abuse, as well  
14 as a determination that the child's treatment plan and developmental  
15 needs are consistent with the placement plan;

16 (c) A policy for the placement of children with high/special needs  
17 in specialized foster homes, including a process for matching the  
18 child's needs with the foster parent's skills and expertise;

19 (d) A limit on the number and ages of children with high/special  
20 needs that may be placed in each specialized foster home;

21 (e) The identification of one or more approved models of skill  
22 building for use by specialized foster home providers;

23 (f) The specific training and consultation requirements that  
24 support the models of skill building;

25 (g) The development of a system of supports, including clinical  
26 consultation and oversight for specialized foster homes;

27 (h) The development of a level of stipend payments to specialized  
28 foster home providers that is not tied to deficits in the child's level  
29 of functioning;

30 (i) The development of clearly defined responsibilities of  
31 specialized foster home providers to include responsibilities to  
32 promote permanence and connections with birth parents; and

33 (j) The development of a process for annual performance reviews of  
34 specialized foster home providers.

35 (4) In creating the plan required under subsection (2) of this  
36 section, the department shall give consideration to the fact that this  
37 group of providers may create a potential future collective bargaining  
38 unit, if authorized in the future.

1 (5) The department shall include in the plan cost estimates for  
2 implementation of the specialized foster home program on a statewide  
3 basis.

4 (6) In developing the plan, the department is directed to consider  
5 and discuss with stakeholders whether the providers identified in the  
6 plan as meeting the requirements for dealing with high/special needs  
7 foster children should be referred to or classified as other than  
8 foster parents.

9  
10 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** The department shall submit its plan to the  
11 appropriate legislative committees no later than November 15, 2008.  
12 Until such time as the legislature approves a specialized foster home  
13 program, the department shall not take steps to implement such a  
14 program."

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17 On page 1, line 2 of the title, after "licensing;" strike the  
18 remainder of the title and insert "and creating new sections."

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**EFFECT:** Requires DSHS to develop a plan to create a specialized foster home program that will set criteria that foster parents must meet to participate in the program. It also requires DSHS to include in the plan the criteria by which high/special needs children will be chosen to be placed in one of these homes as well as the costs for implementation of this plan statewide. The plan is due to the appropriate committees of the legislature no later than November 15, 2008.