

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
84R936 MCK-D

S.B. 125
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Health & Human Services
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As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Currently, Child Protective Services rules require caseworkers to have a placement plan for a child by the 45th day in care. A thorough assessment of the psychosocial needs of a foster child is imperative for determining appropriate mental health treatment and placement within the foster system. Because a stable first placement is critical in determining the success of a child's time spent in the conservatorship of the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS), S.B. 125 enhances the development of the placement plan by requiring such an assessment to be done before the 45th day after a child enters into the conservatorship of DFPS. The assessment will include a screening for trauma and interviews with individuals who have knowledge of the child's needs.

Additionally, to improve the efficiency of the assessment process and the quality and usefulness of the reports produced, the bill requires DFPS to develop a schedule of approved assessment tools that may be used in the performance of an assessment, and guidelines regarding the contents of an assessment report. By accurately assessing a child as he or she enters care, ultimate outcomes for the child can be improved, and the expenditure of state resources on unnecessary and more expensive testing, and multiple placements, can be minimized.

As proposed, S.B. 125 amends current law relating to certain assessments for children in the conservatorship of the Department of Family and Protective Services.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Chapter 266, Family Code, by adding Section 266.012, as follows:

Sec. 266.012. COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENTS. (a) Requires that a child receive a developmentally appropriate, comprehensive psychosocial assessment not later than the 45th day after the date the child enters the conservatorship of the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS). Requires that the assessment include:

- (1) a screening for trauma; and
- (2) interviews with individuals who have knowledge of the child's needs.

(b) Requires that DFPS develop:

- (1) a schedule of approved assessment tools that may be used in the performance of an assessment; and
- (2) guidelines regarding the contents of an assessment report.

SECTION 2. Effective date: September 1, 2015.