

A-Engrossed Senate Bill 915

Ordered by the Senate April 18
Including Senate Amendments dated April 18

Sponsored by Senator GELSER BLOUIN

SUMMARY

The following summary is not prepared by the sponsors of the measure and is not a part of the body thereof subject to consideration by the Legislative Assembly. It is an editor's brief statement of the essential features of the measure. The statement includes a measure digest written in compliance with applicable readability standards.

Digest: The Act tells DHS that a certain DHS program must handle child abuse reports involving certain children. (Flesch Readability Score: 60.1).

Directs the Director of Human Services to ensure that standards and procedures for the assessment and investigation of reports of child abuse committed by certain persons are investigated by a department program that specializes in training, investigations and safety. **Applies to assessments and investigations pending or commenced on or after July 1, 2027.**

A BILL FOR AN ACT

Relating to the investigation of child abuse committed by a person who is unrelated to the child; creating new provisions; and amending ORS 409.185.

Be It Enacted by the People of the State of Oregon:

SECTION 1. ORS 409.185 is amended to read:

409.185. (1)(a) The Director of Human Services shall oversee the development of standards and procedures for assessment, investigation and enforcement of child protective services.

(b) The director shall ensure that the standards and procedures developed under this subsection require that assessments and investigations of reports of child abuse conducted by the department are conducted by the program that specializes in training, investigations and safety, if the reported abuse involves a child residing with a foster family or in a foster home, and the foster family or foster home is certified by the department unless the person who is the subject of the assessment or investigation is the child's parent.

(2)(a) The Department of Human Services shall take action to implement the provision of child protective services as outlined in ORS 417.705 to 417.800 and based on the recommendations in the 1992 "Oregon Child Protective Services Performance Study" published by the University of Southern Maine.

(b) In all substantiated cases of child abuse and neglect, the role of the department is to complete a comprehensive family assessment of risk of abuse or neglect, or both, assess service needs and provide immediate protective services as necessary.

(c) The department shall provide remedial services needed to ensure the safety of the child.

(d) In all cases of child abuse and neglect for which a criminal investigation is conducted, the role of law enforcement agencies is to provide a legally sound, child sensitive investigation of whether abuse or neglect or both have occurred and to gather other evidence and perform other responsibilities in accordance with interagency agreements.

(e) The department and law enforcement agencies shall conduct the investigation and assess-

NOTE: Matter in **boldfaced** type in an amended section is new; matter [*italic and bracketed*] is existing law to be omitted. New sections are in **boldfaced** type.

ment concurrently, based upon the protocols and procedures of the county child abuse multidisciplinary team in each jurisdiction.

(f) When the department and law enforcement agencies conduct a joint investigation and assessment, the activities of the department and agencies are to be clearly differentiated by the protocols of the county child abuse multidisciplinary team.

(g) Nothing in this subsection is intended to be inconsistent with ORS 418.702, 418.747 and 418.748 and ORS chapter 419B.

(h) In all cases of child abuse for which an investigation is conducted, the department shall provide a child's parent, guardian or caregiver with a clear written explanation of the investigation process, the court hearing process and the rights of the parent, guardian or caregiver in the abuse investigation and in the court proceedings related to the abuse investigation.

(3) Upon receipt of a recommendation of the Children's Advocate under ORS 417.815 (2)(e), the department shall implement the recommendation or give the Children's Advocate written notice of an intent not to implement the recommendation.

SECTION 2. The amendments to ORS 409.185 by section 1 of this 2025 Act apply to assessments or investigations of reports of child abuse described in ORS 409.185 (1)(b) that are pending on the operative date set forth in section 3 of this 2025 Act or that are commenced on or after the operative date set forth in section 3 of this 2025 Act.

SECTION 3. (1) The amendments to ORS 409.185 by section 1 of this 2025 Act become operative on July 1, 2027.

(2) The Director of Human Services may take any action before the operative date specified in subsection (1) of this section that is necessary for the director to exercise, on and after the operative date specified in subsection (1) of this section, all of the duties, functions and powers conferred on the director by the amendments to ORS 409.185 by section 1 of this 2025 Act.