

CHILD WELFARE AMENDMENTS

2005 GENERAL SESSION

STATE OF UTAH

Chief Sponsor: Dan R. Eastman

House Sponsor: Steven R. Mascaro

LONG TITLE

General Description:

This bill amends provisions of the Human Services Code, the Judicial Code, and provisions relating to child welfare.

Highlighted Provisions:

This bill:

- ▶ replaces the term "treatment plan" with the term "child and family plan";
- ▶ clarifies access to certain protected and confidential records;
- ▶ provides that the inability to identify or locate an alleged perpetrator of child abuse may not be used by the division as a basis for determining that a report is unsupported;
- ▶ provides that a child and family plan may only include requirements that:
 - address findings made by the court; or
 - are requested or approved by a parent or guardian of the child, and are agreed to by the division and the guardian ad litem;
- ▶ addresses the circumstances under which parent-time may be denied; and
- ▶ makes technical changes.

Monies Appropriated in this Bill:

None

]Other Special Clauses:

None

Utah Code Sections Affected:

AMENDS:

53B-8d-102, as enacted by Chapter 279, Laws of Utah 2001

62A-4a-116, as last amended by Chapters 86 and 201, Laws of Utah 2004

62A-4a-202.3, as last amended by Chapter 124, Laws of Utah 2004

62A-4a-203.5, as enacted by Chapter 274, Laws of Utah 1998

62A-4a-205, as last amended by Chapter 356, Laws of Utah 2004

78-3a-311, as last amended by Chapter 356, Laws of Utah 2004

78-3a-311.5, as enacted by Chapter 246, Laws of Utah 2002

78-3a-312, as last amended by Chapters 168 and 306, Laws of Utah 2002

78-3a-313.5, as enacted by Chapter 274, Laws of Utah 1998

78-3a-407, as last amended by Chapter 246, Laws of Utah 2002

78-3a-912, as last amended by Chapter 356, Laws of Utah 2004

Be it enacted by the Legislature of the state of Utah:

Section 1. Section **53B-8d-102** is amended to read:

53B-8d-102. Definitions.

As used in this chapter:

(1) "Division" means the Division of Child and Family Services.

(2) "Long-term foster care" means an individual who remains in the custody of the division, whether or not the individual resides;

(a) with licensed foster parents; or

(b) in independent living arrangements under the supervision of the division.

(3) "State institution of higher education" means:

(a) those institutions designated in Section 53B-1-102; and

(b) any public institution that offers postsecondary education in consideration of the payment of tuition or fees for the attainment of educational or vocational objectives leading to a degree or certificate, including:

(i) business schools[;];

(ii) technical schools[;];

- (iii) applied technology centers[;];
- (iv) trade schools[;]; and
- (v) institutions offering related apprenticeship programs.

(4) "Tuition" means tuition at the rate for residents of the state.

(5) "Ward of the state" means an individual:

(a) who is:

(i) at least 17 years of age; and

(ii) not older than 26 years of age;

(b) who had a permanency goal in the individual's [treatment] child and family plan, as [defined] described in Sections 62A-4a-205 and 78-3a-312, of long-term foster care while in the custody of the division; and

(c) for whom the custody of the division was not terminated as a result of adoption.

Section 2. Section **62A-4a-116** is amended to read:

62A-4a-116. Management Information System -- Requirements -- Contents --

Purpose -- Access.

(1) (a) The division shall develop and implement a Management Information System that meets the requirements of this section and the requirements of federal law and regulation.

(b) The information and records contained in the Management Information System;

(i) are protected records under Title 63, Chapter 2, Government Records Access and Management Act[;]; and

(ii) ~~except [for the limited, specific, and narrow provisions relating to licensing, contained in Section 62A-4a-116.2, and those provisions relating to contract providers, described in Subsection (6), they] as provided in Subsection (1)(c), are available only to [those] a person with statutory authorization under Title 63, Chapter 2, Government Records Access and Management Act, to review [under that law. They are also available to those who have a] the information and records described in this Subsection (1)(b).~~

(c) Notwithstanding Subsection (1)(b)(ii), the information and records described in Subsection (1)(b)(ii) are available to a person:

(i) as provided under Subsection (6) or Section 62A-4a-116.2; or
(ii) who has specific statutory authorization to access the [record] information or records
 for the purpose of assisting the state with state and federal requirements to maintain information solely for the purpose of protecting minors and providing services to families in need.

(2) With regard to all child welfare cases, the Management Information System shall provide each caseworker and the department's office of licensing, exclusively for the purposes of foster parent licensure and monitoring, with a complete history of each child in that worker's caseload, including ~~[the following information]~~:

(a) a record of all past action taken by the division with regard to that child and the child's siblings;

(b) the complete case history and all reports and information in the control or keeping of the division regarding that child and the child's siblings;

(c) the number of times the child has been in the custody of the division;

(d) the cumulative period of time the child has been in the custody of the division;

(e) a record of all reports of abuse or neglect received by the division with regard to that child's parent, parents, or guardian including:

(i) for each report, documentation of the:

(A) latest status; or [the]

(B) final outcome or determination [regarding each report, including]; and

(ii) information that indicates whether each report was found to be:

(A) supported[;];

(B) unsupported[;];

(C) substantiated by a juvenile court[;];

(D) unsubstantiated by a juvenile court[;]; or

(E) without merit;

(f) the number of times the child's parent or parents ~~[have]~~ failed any ~~[treatment]~~ child and family plan; and

(g) the number of different caseworkers who have been assigned to that child in the past.

(3) The division's Management Information System shall ~~[also]~~:

(a) contain all key elements of each family's current ~~[treatment]~~ child and family plan, including:

(i) the dates and number of times the plan has been administratively or judicially reviewed~~[-]~~;

(ii) the number of times the parent or parents have failed that ~~[treatment]~~ child and family plan~~[-]~~; and

(iii) the exact length of time ~~[that treatment]~~ the child and family plan has been in effect; and

(b) alert caseworkers regarding deadlines for completion of and compliance with policy, including ~~[treatment]~~ child and family plans.

(4) With regard to all child protective services cases, the Management Information System shall ~~[also]~~:

(a) monitor the compliance of each case with:

(i) division rule and policy~~[-]~~;

(ii) state law~~[-]~~; and

(iii) federal law and regulation; and

(b) include the age and date of birth of the alleged perpetrator at the time the abuse or neglect is alleged to have occurred, in order to ensure accuracy regarding the identification of the alleged perpetrator.

(5) Except as provided in Subsection (6) regarding contract providers and Section 62A-4a-116.2 regarding limited access to the Licensing Information System, all information contained in the division's Management Information System is available to the department, upon the approval of the executive director, on a need-to-know basis.

(6) (a) ~~[The]~~ Subject to this Subsection (6), the division may allow its contract providers, court clerks designated by the Administrative Office of the Courts, and the Office of the Guardian Ad Litem to have limited access to the Management Information System.

(b) A division contract provider has access only to information about ~~[persons who are]~~ a

person who is currently receiving services from that specific contract provider.

(c) (i) Designated court clerks ~~[shall]~~ may only have access to information necessary to comply with Subsection 78-3h-102(2).

(ii) The Office of the Guardian Ad Litem ~~[has]~~ may access only ~~[to]~~ the information ~~[about]~~ that:

(A) relates to children and families where the Office of the Guardian Ad Litem ~~[has been]~~ is appointed by a court to represent the interests of the children~~[- The access granted to the Office of the Guardian Ad Litem is limited to information]; and~~

(B) except as provided in Subsection (6)(d), is entered into the ~~[system]~~ Management Information System on or after July 1, 2004~~[- except the office may].~~

(d) Notwithstanding Subsection (6)(c)(ii)(B), the Office of the Guardian Ad Litem shall have access to all child abuse and neglect referrals about children and families where the office has been appointed by a court to represent the interests of the children, regardless of the date that the information is entered into the Management Information System.

~~[(b)]~~ (e) Each contract provider and designated representative of the Office of the Guardian Ad Litem who requests access to information contained in the Management Information System shall:

(i) take all necessary precautions to safeguard the security of the information contained in the Management Information System;

(ii) train its employees regarding:

(A) requirements for protecting the information contained in the Management Information System as required by this chapter and under Title 63, Chapter 2, Government Records Access and Management Act~~[-]; and~~

(B) the criminal penalties under Sections 62A-4a-412 and 63-2-801 for improper release of information; and

(iii) monitor its employees to ensure that they protect the information contained in the Management Information System as required by law.

~~[(c)]~~ (f) The division shall take reasonable precautions to ensure that its contract

providers comply with the requirements of this Subsection (6).

(7) The division shall take all necessary precautions, including password protection and other appropriate and available technological techniques, to prevent unauthorized access to or release of information contained in the Management Information System.

Section 3. Section **62A-4a-202.3** is amended to read:

62A-4a-202.3. Investigation -- Supported or unsupported reports -- Child in protective custody.

(1) When a child is taken into protective custody in accordance with Section 62A-4a-202.1, 78-3a-106, or 78-3a-301, or when the division takes any other action which would require a shelter hearing under Subsection 78-3a-306(1), the division shall immediately initiate an investigation of the:

(a) circumstances of the minor; and [the facts surrounding the minor's being taken]

(b) grounds upon which the decision to place the minor into protective custody was made.

(2) The division's investigation shall [include, among other actions necessary to meet] conform to reasonable professional standards, and shall include:

(a) a search for and review of any records of past reports of abuse or neglect involving:

(i) the same child[;];

(ii) any sibling or other child residing in [that household,] the same household as the child; and

(iii) the alleged perpetrator;

(b) with regard to a child who is five years of age or older, a personal interview with the child;

(i) outside of the presence of the alleged perpetrator[;]; and

(ii) conducted in accordance with the requirements of Subsection (7);

(c) if [their whereabouts are known] a parent or guardian can be located, an interview with at least one of the child's parents or guardian;

(d) an interview with the person who reported the abuse, unless [anonymous] the report

was made anonymously;

(e) where possible and appropriate, interviews with other third parties who have had direct contact with the child, including:

- (i) school personnel; and
- (ii) the child's health care provider;

(f) an unscheduled visit to the child's home, unless:

(i) the division has reasonable cause to believe that the reported abuse was committed by a person who:

(A) is not the child's parent; and

(B) does not:

~~(A)~~ (I) live in the child's home; or

~~(B)~~ (II) otherwise have access to the child in the child's home; or

(ii) an unscheduled visit is not necessary to obtain evidence for the investigation; and

(g) if appropriate and indicated in any case alleging physical injury, sexual abuse, or failure to meet the child's medical needs, a medical examination~~[. That examination shall be]~~, obtained no later than 24 hours after the child ~~[was]~~ is placed in protective custody.

(3) The division may rely on a written report of a prior interview rather than conducting an additional interview, if:

(a) law enforcement ~~[has]~~:

(i) previously conducted a timely and thorough investigation regarding the alleged abuse, neglect, or dependency; and ~~[has]~~

(ii) produced a written report;

(b) ~~[that]~~ the investigation described in Subsection (3)(a)(i) included one or more of the interviews required by Subsection (2); and

(c) the division finds that an additional interview is not in the best interest of the child.

(4) (a) The division's determination of whether a report is supported or unsupported may be based on the child's statements alone.

(b) Inability to identify or locate the perpetrator may not be used by the division as a

basis for:

(i) determining that a report is [~~unsubstantiated;~~ unsupported; or [for]

(ii) closing the case.

(c) The division may not determine a case to be unsupported or identify a case as unsupported solely because the perpetrator was an out-of-home perpetrator.

(d) Decisions regarding whether a report is supported, unsupported, or without merit shall be based on the facts of the case at the time the report was made.

(5) The division should maintain protective custody of the child if it finds that one or more of the following conditions exist:

(a) the minor [~~has no~~ does not have a natural parent, guardian, or responsible relative who is able and willing to provide safe and appropriate care for the minor;

(b) (i) shelter of the minor is a matter of necessity for the protection of the minor; and

(ii) there are no reasonable means by which the minor can be protected in:

(A) the minor's home; or

(B) the home of a responsible relative;

(c) there is substantial evidence that the parent or guardian is likely to flee the jurisdiction of the court; or

(d) the minor has left a previously court ordered placement.

(6) (a) Within 24 hours after receipt of a child into protective custody, excluding weekends and holidays, the division shall:

(i) convene a child protection team to review the circumstances regarding removal of the child from the child's home or school; and

(ii) prepare the testimony and evidence that will be required of the division at the shelter hearing, in accordance with Section 78-3a-306.

(b) [~~Members of the team~~ The child protection team described in Subsection (6)(a)(i) shall include:

(i) the caseworker assigned to the case [~~and~~];

(ii) the caseworker who made the decision to remove the child;

~~[(ii)]~~ (iii) a representative of the school or school district ~~[in which]~~ where the child attends school;

~~[(iii)]~~ (iv) the peace officer who removed the child from the home;

~~[(iv)]~~ (v) a representative of the appropriate Children's Justice Center, if one is established within the county where the child resides;

~~[(v)]~~ (vi) if appropriate, and known to the division, a therapist or counselor who is familiar with the child's circumstances; and

~~[(vi)]~~ (vii) any other individuals determined appropriate and necessary by the team coordinator and chair.

(c) At the 24-hour meeting, the division shall have available for review and consideration the complete child protective services and foster care history of the child and the child's parents and siblings.

(7) (a) After receipt of a child into protective custody and prior to the adjudication hearing, all investigative interviews with the child that are initiated by the division shall be:

(i) audio or video taped~~;~~; and ~~[the child shall be allowed to have]~~

(ii) except as provided in Subsection (7)(b), conducted with a support person of the child's choice present. ~~[That]~~

(b) Notwithstanding Subsection (7)(a)(ii), the support person who is present for an interview of a child may not be an alleged perpetrator.

(8) The division shall cooperate with law enforcement investigations regarding the alleged perpetrator.

(9) The division may not close an investigation solely on the grounds that the division investigator is unable to locate the child until all reasonable efforts have been made to locate the child and family members~~[-Those efforts include]~~ including:

(a) visiting the home at times other than normal work hours;

(b) contacting local schools;

(c) contacting local, county, and state law enforcement agencies; and

(d) checking public assistance records.

Section 4. Section **62A-4a-203.5** is amended to read:

62A-4a-203.5. Mandatory petition for termination of parental rights.

(1) For purposes of this section, "abandoned infant" means a child who is 12 months of age or younger whose parent or parents:

(a) although having legal custody of the child, fail to maintain physical custody of the child without making arrangements for the care of the child;

(b) have failed to maintain physical custody, and have failed to exhibit the normal interest of a natural parent without just cause; or

(c) are unwilling to have physical custody of the child.

(2) Except as provided in Subsection (3), notwithstanding any other provision of this chapter or of Title 78, Chapter 3a, Juvenile Court Act of 1996, the division shall file a petition for termination of parental rights with regard to:

(a) an abandoned infant; or

(b) a parent, whenever a court has determined that the parent has:

(i) committed murder or child abuse homicide of another child of that parent;

(ii) committed manslaughter of another child of that parent;

(iii) aided, abetted, attempted, conspired, or solicited to commit murder, child abuse homicide, or manslaughter against another child of that parent; or

(iv) committed a felony assault or abuse that has resulted in serious physical injury to another child of that parent, or to the other parent of that child.

(3) The division is not required to file a petition for termination of parental rights under Subsection (2) if:

(a) the child is being cared for by a relative;

(b) the division has:

(i) documented in the child's [treatment] child and family plan a compelling reason for determining that filing a petition for termination of parental rights is not in the child's best interest; and

(ii) made that [treatment] child and family plan available to the court for its review; or

(c) (i) the court has previously determined, in accordance with the provisions and limitations of Sections 62A-4a-201, 62A-4a-203, 78-3a-306, and 78-3a-311, that reasonable efforts to reunify the child with [~~his~~] the child's parent or parents were required; and

(ii) the division has not provided, within the time period specified in the [~~treatment~~] child and family plan, services that had been determined to be necessary for the safe return of the child.

Section 5. Section **62A-4a-205** is amended to read:

62A-4a-205. Child and family plan -- Parent-time.

(1) No more than 45 days after a child enters the temporary custody of the division, the child's [~~treatment~~] child and family plan shall be finalized.

(2) (a) The division shall use an interdisciplinary team approach in developing each [~~treatment~~] child and family plan. [~~An~~]

(b) The interdisciplinary team described in Subsection (2)(a) shall include, but is not limited to, representatives from the following fields:

(i) mental health[~~;~~];

(ii) education[~~;~~]; and[~~;~~ ~~where~~]

(iii) if appropriate, [~~a representative of~~] law enforcement.

(3) (a) The division shall involve all of the following in the development of a child's [~~treatment~~] child and family plan:

(i) both of the child's natural parents, unless the whereabouts of a parent are unknown;

(ii) the child;

(iii) the child's foster parents; and

(iv) [~~where~~] if appropriate, the child's stepparent.

(b) In relation to all information considered by the division in developing a [~~treatment~~] child and family plan, additional weight and attention shall be given to the input of the child's natural and foster parents upon their involvement pursuant to Subsections (3)(a)(i) and (iii).

(4) A copy of the [~~treatment~~] child and family plan shall, immediately upon completion, or as soon as reasonably possible thereafter, be provided to the:

(a) guardian ad litem[~~;~~ ~~and to the~~];

(b) child's natural parents; and

(c) child's foster parents [~~immediately upon completion, or as soon as is reasonably possible thereafter~~].

(5) Each [~~treatment~~] child and family plan shall:

(a) specifically provide for the safety of the child, in accordance with federal law[;]; and

(b) clearly define what actions or precautions will, or may be, necessary to provide for the health, safety, protection, and welfare of the child.

(6) The child and family plan shall set forth, with specificity, at least the following:

(a) the reason the child entered [~~Division of Child and Family Services custody, and~~] into the custody of the division;

(b) documentation of the:

(i) reasonable efforts made to prevent placement[~~, or documentation of the~~] of the child in the custody of the division; or

(ii) emergency situation that existed and that prevented the reasonable efforts described in Subsection (6)(b)(i), from being made;

~~[(b)]~~ (c) the primary permanency goal for the child and the reason for selection of that goal;

~~[(c)]~~ (d) the concurrent permanency goal for the child and the reason for the selection of that goal;

~~[(d)]~~ (e) if the plan is for the child to return to the child's family[;];

(i) specifically what the parents must do in order to enable the child to be returned home[;];

(ii) specifically how [~~those~~] the requirements described in Subsection (6)(e)(i) may be accomplished[;]; and

(iii) how [~~those~~] the requirements described in Subsection (6)(e)(i) will be measured;

~~[(e)]~~ (f) the specific services needed to reduce the problems that necessitated [~~placement~~] placing the child in the division's custody[~~, and~~];

(g) the name of the person who will provide for and be responsible for case management;

~~[(f)]~~ (h) subject to Subsection (9), a parent-time schedule between the natural parent and the child;

~~[(g)]~~ (i) the health and mental health care to be provided to address any known or diagnosed mental health needs of the child ~~[and];~~

(j) if residential treatment rather than a foster home is the proposed placement, a requirement for a specialized assessment of the child's health needs including an assessment of mental illness and behavior and conduct disorders; and

~~[(h)]~~ (k) social summaries that include case history information pertinent to case planning.

(7) (a) Each ~~[treatment]~~ child and family plan shall be specific to each child and the child's family, rather than general.

(b) The division shall train its workers to develop ~~[treatment]~~ child and family plans that comply with:

(i) federal mandates; and

(ii) the specific needs of the particular child and the child's family.

~~[(b)]~~ (c) All ~~[treatment]~~ child and family plans and expectations shall be individualized and contain specific time frames.

~~[(c) Treatment]~~ (d) Subject to Subsection (7)(h), child and family plans shall address problems that:

(i) keep ~~[children]~~ a child in placement; and

(ii) keep ~~[them]~~ a child from achieving permanence in ~~[their lives]~~ the child's life.

~~[(d)]~~ (e) Each ~~[treatment]~~ child and family plan shall be designed to minimize disruption to the normal activities of the child's family, including employment and school.

(f) In particular, the time, place, and amount of services, hearings, and other requirements ordered by the court in the child and family plan shall be designed, as much as practicable, to help the child's parents maintain or obtain employment.

~~[(e)]~~ (g) The child's natural parents, foster parents, and where appropriate, stepparents, shall be kept informed of and supported to participate in important meetings and procedures

related to the child's placement.

(h) For purposes of Subsection (7)(d), a child and family plan may only include requirements that:

(i) address findings made by the court; or

(ii) (A) are requested or consented to by a parent or guardian of the child;

(B) are agreed to by the division and the guardian ad litem.

(8) [With] (a) Except as provided in Subsection (8)(b), with regard to a child who is three years of age or younger, if the goal is not to return the child home, the permanency plan for that child shall be adoption. [However]

(b) Notwithstanding Subsection (8)(a), if the division documents to the court that there is a compelling reason that adoption, reunification, guardianship, and kinship placement are not in the child's best interest, the court may order another planned permanent living arrangement in accordance with federal law.

(9) (a) Except as provided in Subsection (9)(b), parent-time may only be denied by a court order issued pursuant to Subsections 78-3a-311(2)(a)(ii) and (b).

(b) Notwithstanding Subsection (9)(a), the person designated by the division or a court to supervise a parent-time session may deny parent-time for that session if the supervising person determines that, based on the parent's condition, it is necessary to deny parent-time in order to:

(i) protect the physical safety of the child;

(ii) protect the life of the child; or

(iii) consistent with Subsection (9)(c), prevent the child from being traumatized by contact with the parent.

(c) In determining whether the condition of the parent described in Subsection (9)(b) will traumatize a child, the person supervising the parent-time session shall consider the impact that the parent's condition will have on the child in light of:

(i) the child's fear of the parent; and

(ii) the nature of the alleged abuse or neglect.

Section 6. Section **78-3a-311** is amended to read:

78-3a-311. Dispositional hearing -- Reunification services -- Exceptions.

(1) The court may:

(a) make any of the dispositions described in Section 78-3a-118[;];

(b) place the [~~child~~] minor in the custody or guardianship of any:

(i) individual; or

(ii) public or private entity or agency[;]; or

(c) order:

(i) protective supervision[;];

(ii) family preservation[;];

(iii) medical or mental health treatment[;]; or

(iv) other services.

(2) (a) (i) Whenever the court orders continued removal at the dispositional hearing, and that the minor remain in the custody of the [~~Division of Child and Family Services, it~~] division, the court shall first:

(A) establish a primary permanency goal for the minor; and

(B) determine whether, in view of the primary permanency goal, reunification services are appropriate for the [~~child~~] minor and the [~~child's~~] minor's family, pursuant to Subsection (3).

(ii) [~~When~~] Subject to Subsection (2)(b), if the court determines that reunification services are appropriate for the [~~child~~] minor and the [~~child's~~] minor's family, the court shall provide for reasonable parent-time with the parent or parents from whose custody the [~~child~~] minor was removed, unless parent-time is not in the best interest of the [~~child~~] minor.

(iii) (A) In cases where obvious sexual abuse, abandonment, or serious physical abuse or neglect are involved, neither the division nor the court has any duty to make "reasonable efforts" or to, in any other way, attempt to provide reunification services, or to attempt to rehabilitate the offending parent or parents.

(B) In all cases, the [~~child's~~] minor's health, safety, and welfare shall be the court's paramount concern in determining whether reasonable efforts to reunify should be made.

(b) (i) For purposes of Subsection (2)(a)(ii), parent-time is in the best interests of a minor

unless the court makes a finding that it is necessary to deny parent-time in order to:

(A) protect the physical safety of the minor;

(B) protect the life of the minor; or

(C) prevent the minor from being traumatized by contact with the parent due to the minor's fear of the parent in light of the nature of the alleged abuse or neglect.

(ii) Notwithstanding Subsection (2)(a)(ii), a court may not deny parent-time based solely on a parent's failure to:

(A) prove that the parent has not used legal or illegal substances; or

(B) comply with an aspect of the child and family plan that is ordered by the court.

~~[(b)]~~ (c) (i) In addition to the primary permanency goal, the court shall establish a concurrent permanency goal~~[-The concurrent permanency goal]~~ that shall include:

(A) a representative list of the conditions under which the primary permanency goal will be abandoned in favor of the concurrent permanency goal; and

(B) an explanation of the effect of abandoning or modifying the primary permanency goal.

(ii) A permanency hearing shall be conducted in accordance with Subsection 78-3a-312(1)(b) within 30 days if something other than reunification is initially established as a ~~[child's]~~ minor's primary permanency goal.

(iii) (A) The court may amend a ~~[child's]~~ minor's primary permanency goal before the establishment of a final permanency plan under Section 78-3a-312.

(B) The court is not limited to the terms of the concurrent permanency goal in the event that the primary permanency goal is abandoned.

(C) If, at any time, the court determines that reunification is no longer a ~~[child's]~~ minor's primary permanency goal, the court shall conduct a permanency hearing in accordance with Section 78-3a-312 ~~[within]~~ on or before the earlier of ~~[30 days of the court's determination or]~~:

(I) 30 days from the day on which the court makes the determination described in this Subsection (2)(c)(iii)(C); or

(II) 12 months from the ~~[original removal of the child]~~ day on which the minor was first

removed from the minor's home.

~~[(e)]~~ (d) (i) (A) If the court determines that reunification services are appropriate, it shall order that the division make reasonable efforts to provide services to the ~~[child]~~ minor and the ~~[child's]~~ minor's parent for the purpose of facilitating reunification of the family, for a specified period of time.

(B) In providing ~~[those]~~ the services described in Subsection (2)(d)(i)(A), the ~~[child's]~~ minor's health, safety, and welfare shall be the division's paramount concern, and the court shall so order.

(ii) The court shall:

(A) determine whether the services offered or provided by the division under the ~~[treatment] child and family plan~~ constitute "reasonable efforts" on the part of the division~~[-The court shall also];~~

(B) determine and define the responsibilities of the parent under the ~~[treatment] child and family plan~~ in accordance with ~~[Section 62A-4a-205. Those duties and responsibilities shall be identified]~~ Subsection 62A-4a-205(6)(e); and

(C) identify on the record the responsibilities described in Subsection (2)(d)(ii)(B), for the purpose of assisting in any future determination regarding the provision of reasonable efforts, in accordance with state and federal law.

(iii) (A) The time period for reunification services may not exceed 12 months from the date that the ~~[child]~~ minor was initially removed from the ~~[child's]~~ minor's home.

(B) Nothing in this section may be construed to entitle any parent to an entire 12 months of reunification services.

(iv) If reunification services ~~[have been]~~ are ordered, the court may terminate those services at any time.

(v) If, at any time, continuation of reasonable efforts to reunify a ~~[child]~~ minor is determined to be inconsistent with the final permanency plan for the ~~[child]~~ minor established pursuant to Subsection 78-3a-312, then measures shall be taken, in a timely manner, to:

(A) place the ~~[child]~~ minor in accordance with the permanency plan~~[-];~~ and ~~[to]~~

(B) complete whatever steps are necessary to finalize the permanent placement of the ~~[child]~~ minor.

~~[(d)]~~ (e) Any physical custody of the minor by the parent or a relative during the period described in Subsection (2)~~[(e)]~~(d) does not interrupt the running of the period.

~~[(e)]~~ (f) (i) If reunification services ~~[have been]~~ are ordered, a permanency hearing shall be conducted by the court in accordance with Section 78-3a-312 at the expiration of the time period for reunification services.

(ii) The permanency hearing shall be held no later than 12 months after the original removal of the ~~[child]~~ minor.

~~[(f)]~~ (iii) If reunification services ~~[have not been]~~ are not ordered, a permanency hearing shall be conducted within 30 days, in accordance with Section 78-3a-312.

~~[(f)]~~ (g) With regard to a ~~[child]~~ minor who is 36 months of age or younger at the time the ~~[child]~~ minor is initially removed from the home, the court shall:

(i) hold a permanency hearing eight months after the date of the initial removal, pursuant to Section 78-3a-312; and

(ii) order the discontinuance of those services after eight months from the initial removal of the ~~[child]~~ minor from the home if the parent or parents have not made substantial efforts to comply with the ~~[treatment]~~ child and family plan.

~~[(g)]~~ (h) With regard to a ~~[child]~~ minor in the custody of the division whose parent or parents ~~[have been]~~ are ordered to receive reunification services but who have abandoned that ~~[child]~~ minor for a period of six months ~~[since]~~ from the date that reunification services were ordered~~[-];~~:

(i) the court shall terminate reunification services~~[-];~~ and

(ii) the division shall petition the court for termination of parental rights.

(3) (a) Because of the state's interest in and responsibility to protect and provide permanency for ~~[children]~~ minors who are abused, neglected, or dependent, the Legislature finds that a parent's interest in receiving reunification services is limited.

(b) The court may determine that:

(i) efforts to reunify a child minor with the child's minor's family are not reasonable or appropriate, based on the individual circumstances~~;~~; and ~~that~~

(ii) reunification services should not be provided.

(c) In determining "reasonable efforts" to be made with respect to a child minor, and in making "reasonable efforts," the child's minor's health, safety, and welfare shall be the paramount concern.

~~(b)~~ (d) (i) There is a presumption that reunification services should not be provided to a parent if the court finds, by clear and convincing evidence, that any of the following circumstances exist:

~~(i)~~ (A) the whereabouts of the parents are unknown, based upon a verified affidavit indicating that a reasonably diligent search has failed to locate the parent;

~~(ii)~~ (B) subject to Subsection (3)(d)(ii), the parent is suffering from a mental illness of such magnitude that it renders him the parent incapable of utilizing reunification services; ~~that finding shall be based on competent evidence from mental health professionals establishing that, even with the provision of services, the parent is unlikely to be capable of adequately caring for the child within 12 months;~~

~~(iii)~~ (C) the minor ~~has been~~ was previously adjudicated as an abused child due to physical or sexual abuse, ~~that~~ and following the adjudication the child minor:

(I) was removed from the custody of his the minor's parent~~[-was]~~;

(II) was subsequently returned to the custody of ~~that~~ the parent~~[-and the minor]~~; and

(III) is being removed due to additional physical or sexual abuse;

~~(iv)~~ (D) the parent ~~has~~;

(I) caused the death of another child minor through abuse or neglect; or ~~has~~

(II) committed, aided, abetted, attempted, conspired, or solicited to commit;

(Aa) murder or manslaughter of a child; or

(Bb) child abuse homicide;

~~(v)~~ (E) the minor ~~has~~ suffered severe abuse by the parent or by any person known by the parent, if the parent knew or reasonably should have known that the person was abusing the

minor;

~~[(vi)]~~ (F) the minor ~~[has been]~~ is adjudicated an abused child as a result of severe abuse by the parent, and the court finds that it would not benefit the ~~[child]~~ minor to pursue reunification services with the offending parent;

~~[(vii)]~~ (G) the parent's rights ~~[have been]~~ are terminated with regard to any other ~~[child]~~ minor;

~~[(viii)]~~ (H) the ~~[child has been]~~ minor is removed from ~~[his]~~ the minor's home on at least two previous occasions and reunification services were offered or provided to the family at those times;

~~[(ix)]~~ (I) the parent has abandoned the ~~[child]~~ minor for a period of six months or longer; or

~~[(x)]~~ (J) any other circumstance that the court determines should preclude reunification efforts or services.

~~[(4)(a) Failure]~~

(ii) The finding under Subsection (3)(d)(i)(B) shall be based on competent evidence from mental health professionals establishing that, even with the provision of services, the parent is not likely to be capable of adequately caring for the minor within 12 months from the day on which the court finding is made.

(4) In determining whether reunification services are appropriate, the court shall take into consideration:

(a) failure of the parent to respond to previous services or comply with ~~[any]~~ a previous ~~[treatment]~~ child and family plan~~;~~;

(b) the fact that the ~~[child]~~ minor was abused while the parent was under the influence of drugs or alcohol~~;~~~~[a past]~~;

(c) any history of violent behavior~~;~~;

(d) whether a parent continues to live with an individual who abused the ~~[child,]~~ minor;

(e) any patterns of the parent's behavior that have exposed the ~~[child]~~ minor to repeated abuse~~;~~~~[or]~~;

(f) testimony by a competent professional that the parent's behavior is unlikely to be successful ~~[, shall be considered in determining whether reunification services are appropriate. (b) The court shall also consider];~~ and

(g) whether the parent has expressed an interest in reunification with the ~~[child, in determining whether reunification services are appropriate]~~ minor.

(5) (a) If reunification services are not ordered pursuant to Subsection (3)(a), and the whereabouts of a parent become known within six months of the out-of-home placement of the minor, the court may order the division to provide reunification services.

(b) The time limits described in Subsection (2) ~~[, however,]~~ are not tolled by the parent's absence.

(6) (a) If a parent is incarcerated or institutionalized, the court shall order reasonable services unless it determines that those services would be detrimental to the minor. ~~[In determining detriment,]~~

(b) In making the determination described in Subsection (6)(a), the court shall consider:

(i) the age of the ~~[child,]~~ minor;

(ii) the degree of parent-child bonding ~~[;];~~

(iii) the length of the sentence ~~[;];~~

(iv) the nature of the treatment ~~[;];~~

(v) the nature of the crime or illness ~~[;];~~

(vi) the degree of detriment to the ~~[child]~~ minor if services are not offered ~~[and,];~~

(vii) for ~~[minors]~~ a minor ten years of age or older, the minor's attitude toward the implementation of family reunification services ~~[;];~~ and

(viii) any other appropriate factors.

(c) Reunification services for an incarcerated parent are subject to the 12-month limitation imposed in Subsection (2).

(d) Reunification services for an institutionalized parent are subject to the 12-month limitation imposed in Subsection (2), unless the court determines that continued reunification services would be in the ~~[child's]~~ minor's best interest.

(7) If, pursuant to [~~Subsection (3)(b)(ii), (iii), (iv), (v), (vi), (vii), (viii), (ix), or (x)~~] Subsections (3)(d)(i)(B) through (J), the court does not order reunification services, a permanency hearing shall be conducted within 30 days, in accordance with Section 78-3a-312.

Section 7. Section **78-3a-311.5** is amended to read:

78-3a-311.5. Six-month review hearing -- Court determination regarding reasonable efforts by the Division of Child and Family Services and parental compliance with child and family plan requirements.

If reunification efforts have been ordered by the court, a hearing shall be held no more than six months after initial removal of a [~~child~~] minor from the [~~child's~~] minor's home, in order for the court to determine whether:

- (1) the division has provided and is providing "reasonable efforts" to reunify a family, in accordance with the [~~treatment~~] child and family plan established under Section 62A-4a-205; and
- (2) the parent has fulfilled or is fulfilling identified duties and responsibilities in order to comply with the requirements of the [~~treatment~~] child and family plan.

Section 8. Section **78-3a-312** is amended to read:

78-3a-312. Permanency hearing -- Final plan -- Petition for termination of parental rights filed -- Hearing on termination of parental rights.

(1) (a) When reunification services have been ordered in accordance with Section 78-3a-311, with regard to a [~~child~~] minor who is in the custody of the Division of Child and Family Services, a permanency hearing shall be held by the court no later than 12 months after the original removal of the [~~child~~] minor.

(b) [~~When no reunification services were ordered~~] If reunification services were not ordered at the dispositional hearing, a permanency hearing shall be held within 30 days from the date of the dispositional hearing.

(2) (a) If reunification services were ordered by the court in accordance with Section 78-3a-311, the court shall, at the permanency hearing, determine, consistent with Subsection (3), whether the [~~child~~] minor may safely be returned to the custody of the [~~child's~~] minor's parent.

(b) If the court finds, by a preponderance of the evidence, that return of the [~~child~~] minor

would create a substantial risk of detriment to the [child's] minor's physical or emotional well-being, the [child] minor may not be returned to the custody of the [child's] minor's parent. [The failure of a parent or guardian to participate in, comply with,]

(c) Prima facie evidence that return of the minor to a parent or guardian would create a substantial risk of detriment to the minor is established if the parent or guardian fails to:

- (i) participate in a court approved child and family plan;
- (ii) comply with a court approved child and family plan in whole or in part[;]; or [to]
- (iii) meet the goals of a court approved [treatment] child and family plan [constitutes prima facie evidence that return of the child to that parent would create a substantial risk of detriment].

~~[(b)]~~ (3) In making a determination under ~~[this]~~ Subsection (2)(a), the court shall review and consider:

- (a) the report prepared by the Division of Child and Family Services[;];
- (b) any admissible evidence offered by the [child's] minor's guardian ad litem[;];
- (c) any report prepared by a foster care citizen review board pursuant to Section 78-3g-103[;];
- (d) any evidence regarding the efforts or progress demonstrated by the parent[;]; and
- (e) the extent to which the parent cooperated and availed himself of the services provided.

~~[(3)]~~ (4) (a) With regard to a case where reunification services were ordered by the court, if a [child] minor is not returned to the [child's] minor's parent or guardian at the permanency hearing, the court shall:

- (i) order termination of reunification services to the parent[~~;~~and];
- (ii) make a final determination regarding whether termination of parental rights, adoption, or permanent custody and guardianship is the most appropriate final plan for the [child] minor, taking into account the [child's] minor's primary permanency goal established by the court pursuant to Section 78-3a-311[;]; and
- (iii) establish a concurrent plan that identifies the second most appropriate final plan for

the minor.

(b) If the Division of Child and Family Services documents to the court that there is a compelling reason that adoption, reunification, guardianship, and kinship placement are not in the ~~[child's]~~ minor's best interest, the court may order another planned permanent living arrangement, in accordance with federal law.

(c) If the ~~[child]~~ minor clearly desires contact with the parent, the court shall take the ~~[child's]~~ minor's desire into consideration in determining the final plan. ~~[In addition, the court shall establish a concurrent plan that identifies the second most appropriate final plan for the child.]~~

~~[(b) The]~~ (d) Consistent with Subsection (4)(e), the court may not extend reunification services beyond 12 months from the date the ~~[child]~~ minor was initially removed from the ~~[child's]~~ minor's home, in accordance with the provisions of Section 78-3a-311, except that the court may extend reunification services for no more than 90 days if ~~[it]~~ the court finds that:

(i) there has been substantial compliance with the ~~[treatment]~~ child and family plan~~;~~
~~that~~];

(ii) reunification is probable within that 90-day period~~;~~]; and ~~[that]~~

(iii) the extension is in the best interest of the ~~[child]~~ minor.

(e) (i) In no event may any reunification services extend beyond 15 months from the date the ~~[child]~~ minor was initially removed from the ~~[child's]~~ minor's home.

(ii) Delay or failure of a parent to establish paternity or seek custody does not provide a basis for the court to extend services for that parent beyond that 12-month period.

~~[(c)]~~ (f) The court may, in its discretion~~;~~];

(i) enter any additional order that it determines to be in the best interest of the ~~[child]~~ minor, so long as that order does not conflict with the requirements and provisions of Subsections ~~[(3)(a) and (b). The court may]~~ (4)(a) through (e); or

(ii) order the division to provide protective supervision or other services to a ~~[child]~~ minor and the ~~[child's]~~ minor's family after the division's custody of a ~~[child]~~ minor has been terminated.

~~[(4)]~~ (5) If the final plan for the ~~[child]~~ minor is to proceed toward termination of parental rights, the petition for termination of parental rights shall be filed, and a pretrial held, within 45 calendar days after the permanency hearing.

~~[(5)]~~ (6) (a) Any party to an action may, at any time, petition the court for an expedited permanency hearing on the basis that continuation of reunification efforts are inconsistent with the permanency needs of the ~~[child]~~ minor.

(b) If the court so determines, it shall order, in accordance with federal law, that:

(i) the ~~[child]~~ minor be placed in accordance with the permanency plan~~[-];~~ and ~~[that]~~

(ii) whatever steps are necessary to finalize the permanent placement of the ~~[child]~~ minor be completed as quickly as possible.

~~[(6)]~~ (7) Nothing in this section may be construed to:

(a) entitle any parent to reunification services for any specified period of time;

(b) limit a court's ability to terminate reunification services at any time prior to a permanency hearing; or

(c) limit or prohibit the filing of a petition for termination of parental rights by any party, or a hearing on termination of parental rights, at any time prior to a permanency hearing. [H]

(8) (a) Subject to Subsection (8)(b), if a petition for termination of parental rights is filed prior to the date scheduled for a permanency hearing, the court may consolidate the hearing on termination of parental rights with the permanency hearing. [H]

(b) For purposes of Subsection (8)(a), if the court consolidates the hearing on termination of parental rights with the permanency hearing~~[-];~~

(i) the court shall first make a finding regarding whether reasonable efforts have been made by the Division of Child and Family Services to finalize the permanency goal for the ~~[child,]~~ minor; and

(ii) any reunification services shall be terminated in accordance with the time lines described in Section 78-3a-311.

(c) A decision on ~~[the]~~ a petition for termination of parental rights shall be made within 18 months from ~~[the date of the child's removal]~~ the day on which the minor is removed from the

minor's home.

Section 9. Section **78-3a-313.5** is amended to read:

78-3a-313.5. Mandatory petition for termination of parental rights.

(1) For purposes of this section, "abandoned infant" means a ~~[child]~~ minor who is 12 months of age or younger whose parent or parents:

(a) although having legal custody of the ~~[child]~~ minor, fail to maintain physical custody of the ~~[child]~~ minor without making arrangements for the care of the ~~[child]~~ minor;

(b) have failed to:

(i) maintain physical custody~~[-];~~ and ~~[have failed to]~~

(ii) exhibit the normal interest of a natural parent without just cause; or

(c) are unwilling to have physical custody of the ~~[child]~~ minor.

(2) Except as provided in Subsection (3), notwithstanding any other provision of this chapter or of Title 62A, Chapter 4a, Child and Family Services, the division shall file a petition for termination of parental rights with regard to:

(a) an abandoned infant; or

(b) the minor of a parent, whenever a court has determined that the parent has:

(i) committed murder or child abuse homicide of another ~~[child]~~ minor of that parent;

(ii) committed manslaughter of another ~~[child]~~ minor of that parent;

(iii) aided, abetted, attempted, conspired, or solicited to commit murder, child abuse homicide, or manslaughter against another ~~[child]~~ minor of that parent; or

(iv) committed a felony assault or abuse that ~~[has resulted]~~ results in serious physical injury to:

(A) another ~~[child]~~ minor of that parent~~[-];~~ or ~~[to]~~

(B) the other parent of ~~[that child]~~ the minor.

(3) The division is not required to file a petition for termination of parental rights under Subsection (2) if:

(a) the ~~[child]~~ minor is being cared for by a relative;

(b) the division has:

(i) documented in the [~~child's treatment~~] minor's child and family plan a compelling reason for determining that filing a petition for termination of parental rights is not in the [~~child's~~] minor's best interest; and

(ii) made that [~~treatment~~] child and family plan available to the court for its review; or

(c) (i) the court has previously determined, in accordance with the provisions and limitations of Sections 62A-4a-201, 62A-4a-203, 78-3a-306, and 78-3a-311, that reasonable efforts to reunify the [~~child~~] minor with [~~his~~] the minor's parent or parents were required; and

(ii) the division has not provided, within the time period specified in the [~~treatment~~] child and family plan, services that had been determined to be necessary for the safe return of the [~~child~~] minor.

Section 10. Section **78-3a-407** is amended to read:

78-3a-407. Grounds for termination of parental rights -- Findings regarding reasonable efforts.

(1) The court may terminate all parental rights with respect to a parent if [~~it~~] the court finds any one of the following:

(a) that the parent has abandoned the [~~child~~] minor;

(b) that the parent has neglected or abused the [~~child~~] minor;

(c) that the parent is unfit or incompetent;

(d) (i) that the [~~child~~] minor is being cared for in an out-of-home placement under the supervision of the court or the division [~~and~~];

(ii) that the parent has substantially neglected, wilfully refused, or has been unable or unwilling to remedy the circumstances that cause the [~~child~~] minor to be in an out-of-home placement[;]; and

(iii) that there is a substantial likelihood that the parent will not be capable of exercising proper and effective parental care in the near future;

(e) failure of parental adjustment, as defined in this chapter;

(f) that only token efforts have been made by the parent:

(i) to support or communicate with the [~~child~~] minor;

- (ii) to prevent neglect of the ~~[child]~~ minor;
- (iii) to eliminate the risk of serious physical, mental, or emotional abuse of the ~~[child]~~ minor; or
- (iv) to avoid being an unfit parent;
- (g) (i) that the parent has voluntarily relinquished the parent's parental rights to the ~~[child,]~~ minor; and ~~[the court finds]~~
 - (ii) that termination is in the ~~[child's]~~ minor's best interest;
 - (h) ~~[the parent]~~ that, after a period of trial during which the ~~[child]~~ minor was returned to live in the ~~[child's]~~ minor's own home, the parent substantially and continuously or repeatedly refused or failed to give the ~~[child]~~ minor proper parental care and protection; or
 - (i) the terms and conditions of safe relinquishment of a newborn child have been complied with, pursuant to Title 62A, Chapter 4a, Part 8, Safe Relinquishment of a Newborn Child.
- (2) The court may not terminate the parental rights of a parent because the parent has failed to complete the requirements of a ~~[treatment]~~ child and family plan.
- (3) (a) ~~[It]~~ Except as provided in Subsection (3)(b), in any case in which the court has directed the division to provide reunification services to a parent, the court must find that the division made reasonable efforts to provide those services before the court may terminate the parent's rights under Subsection (1)(b), (c), (d), (e), (f), or (h).
 - (b) ~~[The]~~ Notwithstanding Subsection (3)(a), the court is not required to make the finding under Subsection (3)(a) before terminating a parent's rights:
 - (i) under Subsection (1)(b) ~~[based upon]~~, if the court finds that the abuse or neglect ~~[found by the court to have]~~ occurred subsequent to adjudication; or
 - (ii) if reasonable efforts to provide the services described in Subsection (3)(a) are not required under federal law.

Section 11. Section **78-3a-912** is amended to read:

78-3a-912. Appointment of attorney guardian ad litem -- Right of refusal -- Duties and responsibilities -- Training -- Trained staff and court-appointed special advocate

volunteers -- Costs -- Immunity -- Annual report.

(1) The court;

(a) may appoint an attorney guardian ad litem to represent the best interest of a minor involved in any case before the court; and

(b) shall consider only the best interest of a minor in determining whether to appoint a guardian ad litem.

(2) An attorney guardian ad litem shall represent the best interest of each minor who may become the subject of a petition alleging abuse, neglect, or dependency, from the [date] earlier of the day that:

(a) the minor is removed from the minor's home by the division[;] or ~~[the date]~~

(b) the petition is filed[; ~~whichever occurs earlier~~].

(3) The Office of the Guardian Ad Litem Director, through an attorney guardian ad litem, shall:

(a) represent the best interest of the minor in all proceedings;

(b) ~~prior to representing any minor before the court~~, be trained in:

(i) applicable statutory, regulatory, and case law[;] and ~~it~~

(ii) accordance with the United States Department of Justice National Court Appointed Special Advocate Association guidelines[; ~~prior to representing any minor before the court~~];

(c) conduct or supervise an independent investigation in order to obtain first-hand, a clear understanding of the situation and needs of the ~~child~~ minor;

(d) (i) personally meet with the minor;

(ii) personally interview the minor if the minor is old enough to communicate;

(iii) determine the minor's goals and concerns regarding placement; and

(iv) personally assess or supervise an assessment of the appropriateness and safety of the minor's environment in each placement;

(e) file written motions, responses, or objections at all stages of a proceeding when necessary to protect the best interest of a minor;

(f) personally or through a trained volunteer, paralegal, or other trained staff, attend all

administrative and foster care citizen review board hearings pertaining to the minor's case;

(g) participate in all appeals unless excused by order of the court;

(h) be familiar with local experts who can provide consultation and testimony regarding the reasonableness and appropriateness of efforts made by the Division of Child and Family Services to:

(i) maintain a minor in the minor's home; or ~~(t)~~

(ii) reunify a minor with the minor's parent;

(i) to the extent possible, and unless it would be detrimental to the minor, personally or through a trained volunteer, paralegal, or other trained staff, keep the minor advised of:

(i) the status of the minor's case[;];

(ii) all court and administrative proceedings[;];

(iii) discussions with, and proposals made by other parties[;];

(iv) court action[;]; and

(v) the psychiatric, medical, or other treatment or diagnostic services that are to be provided to the minor;

(j) review proposed orders for, and as requested by the court[;];

(k) prepare proposed orders with clear and specific directions regarding services, treatment, ~~and~~ evaluation, assessment, and protection of the minor and the minor's family; and

~~(l)~~ (l) personally or through a trained volunteer, paralegal, or other trained staff, monitor implementation of a minor's ~~treatment~~ child and family plan and any dispositional orders to:

(i) determine whether services ordered by the court:

(A) are actually provided[;]; and

(B) are provided in a timely manner[;]; and

(ii) attempt to assess whether ~~they~~ services ordered by the court are accomplishing ~~their~~ the intended goal of the services.

(4) (a) ~~An~~ Consistent with this Subsection (4), an attorney guardian ad litem may use trained volunteers, in accordance with Title 67, Chapter 20, Volunteer Government Workers Act,

trained paralegals, and other trained staff to assist in investigation and preparation of information regarding the cases of individual minors before the court. [~~An~~]

(b) The attorney guardian ad litem described in Subsection (4)(a) may not~~[, however,]~~ delegate the attorney's responsibilities described in Subsection (3).

~~[(b)]~~ (c) All volunteers, paralegals, and staff utilized pursuant to this section shall be trained in and follow, at a minimum, the guidelines established by the United States Department of Justice Court Appointed Special Advocate Association.

~~[(e)]~~ (d) The court may use volunteers trained in accordance with the requirements of Subsection (4)~~[(b)]~~(c) to assist in investigation and preparation of information regarding the cases of individual minors within the jurisdiction.

~~[(d)]~~ (e) When possible and appropriate, the court may use a volunteer who is a peer of the minor appearing before the court, in order to provide assistance to that minor, under the supervision of an attorney guardian ad litem or the attorney's trained volunteer, paralegal, or other trained staff.

(5) The attorney guardian ad litem shall continue to represent the best interest of the minor until released from ~~[duties]~~ that duty by the court.

(6) (a) ~~[The]~~ Consistent with Subsection (6)(b), the juvenile court is responsible for:

(i) all costs resulting from the appointment of an attorney guardian ad litem; and

(ii) the costs of volunteer, paralegal, and other staff appointment and training~~[, and]~~.

(b) The court shall use funds appropriated by the Legislature for the guardian ad litem program to cover ~~[those]~~ the costs described in Subsection (6)(a).

~~[(b)]~~ (c) (i) When the court appoints an attorney guardian ad litem under this section, the court may assess all or part of the attorney's fees, court costs, and paralegal, staff, and volunteer expenses against the minor's parents, parent, or legal guardian in a proportion that the court determines to be just and appropriate.

(ii) The court may not assess those fees or costs against:

(A) a legal guardian, when that guardian is the state~~[-]~~; or ~~[against]~~

(B) consistent with Subsection (6)(d), a parent who is found to be impecunious. [~~If~~]

(d) For purposes of Subsection (6)(c)(ii)(B), if a person claims to be impecunious, the court shall:

(i) require ~~[of]~~ that person to submit an affidavit of impecuniosity as provided in Section 78-7-36; and ~~[the court shall]~~

(ii) follow the procedures and make the determinations as provided in Section 78-7-36.

(7) An attorney guardian ad litem appointed under this section, when serving in the scope of the attorney guardian ad litem's duties as guardian ad litem is considered an employee of the state for purposes of indemnification under Title 63, Chapter ~~[30, Utah]~~ 30d, Governmental Immunity Act of Utah.

(8) (a) An attorney guardian ad litem shall represent the best interest of a minor.

(b) If the minor's wishes differ from the attorney's determination of the minor's best interest, the attorney guardian ad litem shall communicate the minor's wishes to the court in addition to presenting the attorney's determination of the minor's best interest.

(c) A difference between the minor's wishes and the attorney's determination of best interest may not be considered a conflict of interest for the attorney.

~~[(b)]~~ (d) The court may appoint one attorney guardian ad litem to represent the best interests of more than one minor child of a marriage.

(9) An attorney guardian ad litem shall be provided access to all Division of Child and Family Services records regarding the minor at issue and the minor's family.

(10) An attorney guardian ad litem shall maintain current and accurate records regarding:

(a) the number of times the attorney has had contact with each minor; and

(b) the actions the attorney has taken in representation of the minor's best interest.

(11) (a) Except as provided in Subsection (11)(b), all records of an attorney guardian ad litem are confidential and may not be released or made public upon subpoena, search warrant, discovery proceedings, or otherwise. This subsection supersedes Title 63, Chapter 2, Government Records Access and Management Act.

(b) [AH] Consistent with Subsection (11)(d), all records of an attorney guardian ad litem:

(i) are subject to legislative subpoena, under Title 36, Chapter 14, Legislative Subpoena

Powers[;] and

(ii) shall be released to the Legislature.

(c) (i) ~~[Records]~~ Except as provided in Subsection (11)(c)(ii), records released in accordance with Subsection (11)(b) shall be maintained as confidential by the Legislature. ~~[The]~~

(ii) Notwithstanding Subsection (11)(c)(i), the Office of the Legislative Auditor General may~~[, however,]~~ include summary data and nonidentifying information in its audits and reports to the Legislature.

(d) (i) ~~[Because of]~~ Subsection (11)(b) constitutes an exception to Rules of Professional Conduct, Rule 1.6, as provided by Rule 1.6(b)(4), because of:

(A) the unique role of an attorney guardian ad litem described in Subsection (8)[;] and

(B) the state's role and responsibility;

(I) to provide a guardian ad litem program; and[;]

(II) as parens patriae, to protect minors~~[, Subsection (11)(b) constitutes an exception to Rules of Professional Conduct, Rule 1.6, as provided by Rule 1.6(b)(4)].~~

(ii) A claim of attorney-client privilege does not bar access to the records of an attorney guardian ad litem by the Legislature, through legislative subpoena.

(e) The Office of the Guardian Ad Litem shall present an annual report to the Child Welfare Legislative Oversight Panel detailing:

(i) the development, policy, and management of the statewide guardian ad litem program;

(ii) the training and evaluation of attorney guardians ad litem and volunteers; and

(iii) the number of children served by the Office of the Guardian Ad Litem.