

HOUSE BILL NO. HB0033

Children and families initiative.

Sponsored by: Joint Labor, Health and Social Services
Interim Committee

A BILL

for

1 AN ACT relating to children and families; authorizing a
2 study and development of a plan to address the needs of
3 children and families; specifying duties of the department
4 of family services in conducting the study and plan;
5 requiring recommendations in the plan; requiring reports;
6 providing an appropriation; and providing for an effective
7 date.

8

9 *Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Wyoming:*

10

11 **Section 1.**

12

13 (a) The department of family services shall develop a
14 comprehensive plan to improve the lives and futures of all
15 children and families in Wyoming. In developing the plan,
16 the department shall collaborate with other state and local

1 agencies, including the department of health, the
2 department of workforce services, the department of
3 employment, the department of education, the department of
4 corrections, the Wyoming business council, the University
5 of Wyoming, Wyoming community colleges, the judiciary and
6 private groups and businesses, including faith-based
7 organizations and not-for-profit organizations, that
8 express an interest in participating in the development of
9 the plan. The plan shall:

10
11 (i) Consider development of mechanisms to employ
12 the use of public and private resources in an efficient
13 manner to meet the needs of children and families;

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15 (ii) Include life span recommendations,
16 including, in particular, prenatal and early childhood
17 intervention and development practices that promote
18 meaningful lifetime changes and minimize delays in life
19 skills development;

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21 (iii) Review the current judicial system and
22 make recommendations for reforms that may enable courts to
23 better meet the needs of children and families;

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1 (iv) Examine how schools, community
2 organizations, state agencies and the judicial system can
3 work more closely together to enhance a sharing of
4 resources and information to meet the needs of parents,
5 preschool children and elementary and secondary school
6 students;

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8 (v) Examine causes of the most serious problems
9 facing children and families, including poverty, mental
10 health needs, violence, the lack of adequate health care,
11 the use of tobacco and illegal drugs and the abuse of
12 alcohol;

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14 (vi) Examine issues of parent accountability;

15
16 (vii) Encourage and support family stability;
17 and

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19 (viii) Review the state's existing efforts to
20 determine where present funding and human resources could
21 be employed in a more client-centered and efficient manner.

22
23 (b) The department of family services shall submit a
24 preliminary plan with recommendations for any initial

1 legislation to the joint labor, health and social services
2 interim committee no later than November 1, 2004. The final
3 plan shall be submitted no later than October 1, 2005. Any
4 recommendations contained in the plan shall be science-
5 based or reflect practices that have a record of success.
6 The plan shall specifically include recommendations:
7

8 (i) For institutionalizing collaboration among
9 state and local agencies and the private sector, including
10 the business and faith community to provide seamless and
11 integrated services in which funding is blended, when
12 appropriate, to support client-centered plans that meet the
13 needs of individual children and families;
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15 (ii) For addressing gaps or deficiencies in
16 services;
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18 (iii) For early intervention and other services
19 that seek to strengthen the bond between children and
20 parents and place the primary responsibility for raising
21 children on the family;
22

23 (iv) For the consolidation of programs or
24 funding sources where appropriate;

1

2 (v) For the development of comprehensive,
3 integrated state and community level approaches that will
4 leave no child unsupported in critical aspects of life,
5 particularly from birth through five (5) years of age;

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7 (vi) That will result in more integrated,
8 efficient and effective programs and cost savings.

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10 (c) The department shall widely disseminate requests,
11 including through electronic media, for the active
12 participation of private groups and organizations in the
13 development of the plans. Before submitting the preliminary
14 and final plans to the joint labor, health and social
15 services interim committee, the department shall issue
16 drafts of the plans for public review and hold at least one
17 (1) public meeting in a central location in the state to
18 receive public comments on each plan.

19

20 (d) In addition to the appropriation contained in
21 subsection (e) of this section, the department of family
22 services may utilize existing resources and apply for any
23 federal or private grants that may be available to augment
24 funding for the study and plan required under this act.

1 The department may also contract with recognized experts
2 and consultants to conduct the study and develop the plan
3 and recommendations required by this act.

4

5 (e) There is appropriated from the general fund to
6 the department of family services two hundred thousand
7 dollars (\$200,000.00) to implement the purposes of this
8 act.

9

10 **Section 2.** This act is effective immediately upon
11 completion of all acts necessary for a bill to become law
12 as provided by Article 4, Section 8 of the Wyoming
13 Constitution.

14

15 (END)