



Oregon

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DATE: February 19, 2019

TO: Senate Committee on Human Services

FROM: Oregon Department of Human Services

SUBJECT: SB 181, Relating to child-caring agencies

INTRODUCTION

SB 181 will modify the definition of “child-caring agency” to include county operated programs that provide care or services to children in the custody of the Department of Human Services (DHS) or the Oregon Youth Authority (OYA).

BACKGROUND

Currently, under ORS 418.205 the definition of child-caring agency (CCA) does not capture county operated programs providing care or services to children in the custody of DHS or OYA. The Children’s Care Licensing Program (CCLP) within DHS’s Office of Training, Investigations and Safety (OTIS) who is responsible for licensing CCAs is unable to license county operated programs for this reason.

With the goal of ensuring consistency and accountability DHS Child Welfare requires contracted county operated programs obtain an approval from CCLP, in place of licensing. The approval letter includes language matching CCA Rules with the 11 county operated programs serving children in DHS or OYA custody.

Additionally, the Investigations Unit of OTIS is responsible for completing child abuse investigations in these facilities as well as CCAs. The exclusion of county operated programs in the child-caring agency definition leads to inconsistent statutory definitions of abuse.

DISCUSSION

Modifying the definition of “child-caring agency” to include county operated programs that provide care or services to children in the custody of DHS or OYA will have two impacts;

- 1) Equip the CCLP with the legal authority to license county operated programs, effectively giving them the ability to take licensing corrective actions when appropriate.
- 2) Further clarify the statutory definition of abuse and ensure consistency across private and county operated facilities.

SUMMARY

SB 181 provides an opportunity to ensure children in the custody of DHS and OYA experience consistency in both licensing standards and abuse investigations regardless of the setting they are served in. By providing consistency in statute this bill will also enable the CCLP and Investigations Unit of OTIS to more efficiently manage the agencies responsibilities to license and investigate programs serving children in DHS or OYA custody.