

## LEGISLATIVE BILL 637

Approved by the Governor April 6, 1987

Introduced by Scofield, 49; Higgins, 9; Landis, 46;  
Wesely, 26; Moore, 24; Marsh, 29;  
Morehead, 30; Hall, 7; Withem, 14;  
Warner, 25; Barrett, 39; Smith, 33;  
Pirsch, 10

AN ACT relating to children; to state intent; to adopt a family policy; to provide guidelines for certain service providers; and to require a report.

Be it enacted by the people of the State of Nebraska,

Section 1. (1) The Legislature finds and declares that children develop their unique potential in relation to a caring social unit, usually the family, and other nurturing environments, especially the schools and the community. The Legislature further finds that the state shall declare a family policy to guide the actions of state government in dealing with problems and crises involving children and families.

(2) When children and families require assistance from a department, agency, institution, committee, or commission of state government, every reasonable effort shall be made to provide such assistance in the least intrusive and least restrictive method and to deliver such assistance as close to the home community of the child or family requiring assistance as possible. The policy set forth in this subsection shall be (a) interpreted in conjunction with all relevant laws, rules, and regulations of the state and shall apply to all children and families who have need of services or who, by their circumstances or actions, have violated the laws, rules, or regulations of the state and are found to be in need of treatment or rehabilitation and (b) implemented through the cooperative efforts of state, county, and municipal governments, legislative, judicial, and executive branches of government, and other public and private resources.

Sec. 2. The following principles shall guide the actions of state government and departments, agencies, institutions, committees, and commissions which become involved with children and families in need of assistance or services:

(1) Prevention, early identification of problems, and early intervention shall be guiding philosophies when the state or a department, agency, institution, committee, or commission plans or implements services for children or families;

(2) When children or families request assistance, state and local government resources shall be utilized to complement community efforts to help meet the needs of such children or families. The state shall encourage community involvement in the provision of services to children and families, including as an integral part, local government and public and private group participation, in order to encourage and provide innovative strategies in the development of services for children and families;

(3) To maximize resources the state shall develop methods to coordinate services and resources for children and families. Every child-serving department, agency, institution, committee, or commission shall recognize that the jurisdiction of such department, agency, institution, committee, or commission in serving multiple-need children is not mutually exclusive;

(4) When children are removed from their home, permanency planning shall be the guiding philosophy. It shall be the policy of the state to reunite the child with his or her family in a time frame appropriate to the age and developmental needs of the child if reunification is in the best interest of the child; and

(5) When families cannot be reunited and when active parental involvement is absent, adoption shall be aggressively pursued. Absent the possibility of adoption other permanent settings shall be pursued.

Sec. 3. Every department, agency, institution, committee, and commission of state government which is concerned or responsible for children and families shall submit, as part of the annual budget request of such department, agency, institution, committee, or commission, a comprehensive statement of the efforts such department, agency, institution, committee, or commission has taken to carry out the policy and principles set forth in sections 1 and 2 of this act. The statement shall include, but not be limited to, a listing of programs provided for children and families and the priority of such programs, a summary of the expenses incurred in the provision and administration of services for children and families, the number of clients served by each program, and data being collected to demonstrate the short-term and long-term effectiveness of each program.