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AB-601 Child abuse: reporting. (2025-2026)

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AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY APRIL 10, 2025

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY MARCH 25, 2025

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE— 2025–2026 REGULAR SESSION

ASSEMBLY BILL

NO. 601

Introduced by Assembly Member Jackson

February 13, 2025

An act to amend ~~Section 11165.7 of the Penal Code, and to amend~~ Sections 16504, 16587, and 16589 of, *and* to add Sections ~~10606.4, 16544.5, and 18950.1 to, and to add and repeal Section 10606.5 of, 16544.5 and 18950.1 to,~~ the Welfare and Institutions Code, relating to child abuse.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 601, as amended, Jackson. Child abuse: reporting.

Existing law, the Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Act, establishes procedures for the reporting and investigation of suspected child abuse or neglect. The act requires certain professionals, including specified health practitioners and social workers, known as “mandated reporters,” to report known or reasonably suspected child abuse or neglect to a local law enforcement agency or a county welfare or probation department, as specified.

This bill would require the State Department of Social Services, through the State Office of Child Abuse Prevention, to, by no later than July 1, 2027, develop a standardized curriculum for mandated reporters, and to make that training available on its internet website. The bill ~~would require all employers of mandated reporters to require those mandated reporters receive that training within the first 3 months of their employment, as specified. The bill would authorize the State Department of Social Services to audit records of any agency or organization employing a mandated reporter, and would authorize the department to seek a court order to require compliance with these provisions from any employer who violates these provisions. The bill would also require every county welfare services department to ensure all child welfare department social workers operating the county's response system receive the training.~~ *would, except as provided, require an employer having one or more mandated reporters to ensure completion of the training within the first 3 months of the mandated reporter's employment, or on or before March 1, 2030, whichever is later. The bill would require completion of the training to be documented in a manner that would allow the department to verify completion upon request.*

This bill would ~~require the State Department of Social Services to monitor disparities in the child welfare system and submit a report on those disparities, and on the development of the training requirements of this bill, on or before January 1, 2027. The bill would additionally~~ require the State Department of Social Services and the State Department of Health Care Services to provide updates every 90 days to specified legislative committees on guidance to counties with respect to payer of last resort federal requirements and revenue maximization of specified funding sources for services related to these provisions, until those committees make findings that this requirement has been met.

Existing law establishes the California Child Welfare Council to serve as an advisory board responsible for improving the collaboration and processes of the multiple agencies and the courts that serve the children and youth in the child welfare and foster care systems. Existing law requires the council to monitor and report the extent to which child welfare and foster care programs and the courts are responsive to the needs of children in their joint care.

This bill would require the California Child Welfare Council to establish a Mandated Reporting Advisory Committee, as specified, and would state the intent of the Legislature that the committee ensure the transformation of mandated reporting to community supporting continues and disparities in the child welfare system are eliminated.

The federal Family First Prevention Services Act provides a state with the option to use certain federal funds to provide mental health and substance abuse prevention and treatment services and in-home parent skill-based programs to a child who is a candidate for foster care or a child in foster care who is a pregnant or parenting foster youth, as specified. Existing state law authorizes a county to elect to provide those prevention services by providing a written plan to the State Department of Social Services, which has oversight of the Family First Prevention Services program. Existing law requires the county to consult with other relevant county agencies, as specified, in the development of the plan.

The bill would require each county's written plan to include the county's plans to provide information for mandated reporters regarding resources available to support families in their communities. By imposing additional duties on counties, this bill would impose a state-mandated local program.

The California Constitution requires the state to reimburse local agencies and school districts for certain costs mandated by the state. Statutory provisions establish procedures for making that reimbursement.

This bill would provide that, if the Commission on State Mandates determines that the bill contains costs mandated by the state, reimbursement for those costs shall be made pursuant to the statutory provisions noted above.

Vote: majority Appropriation: no Fiscal Committee: yes Local Program: yes

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

~~SECTION 1. Section 11165.7 of the Penal Code is amended to read:~~

~~11165.7.(a) As used in this article, "mandated reporter" is defined as any of the following:~~

~~(1) A teacher.~~

~~(2) An instructional aide.~~

~~(3) A teacher's aide or teacher's assistant employed by a public or private school.~~

~~(4) A classified employee of a public school.~~

~~(5) An administrative officer or supervisor of child welfare and attendance, or a certificated pupil personnel employee of a public or private school.~~

~~(6) An administrator of a public or private day camp.~~

~~(7) An administrator or employee of a public or private youth center, youth recreation program, or youth organization.~~

~~(8) An administrator, board member, or employee of a public or private organization whose duties require direct contact and supervision of children, including a foster family agency.~~

~~(9) An employee of a county office of education or the State Department of Education whose duties bring the employee into contact with children on a regular basis.~~

~~(10) A licensee, an administrator, or an employee of a licensed community care or child daycare facility.~~

~~(11) A Head Start program teacher.~~

~~(12)A licensing worker or licensing evaluator employed by a licensing agency, as defined in Section 11165.11.~~

~~(13)A public assistance worker.~~

~~(14)An employee of a childcare institution, including, but not limited to, foster parents, group home personnel, and personnel of residential care facilities.~~

~~(15)A social worker, probation officer, or parole officer.~~

~~(16)An employee of a school district police or security department.~~

~~(17)A person who is an administrator or presenter of, or a counselor in, a child abuse prevention program in a public or private school.~~

~~(18)A district attorney investigator, inspector, or local child support agency caseworker, unless the investigator, inspector, or caseworker is working with an attorney appointed pursuant to Section 317 of the Welfare and Institutions Code to represent a minor.~~

~~(19)A peace officer, as defined in Chapter 4.5 (commencing with Section 830) of Title 3 of Part 2, who is not otherwise described in this section.~~

~~(20)A firefighter, except for volunteer firefighters.~~

~~(21)A physician and surgeon, psychiatrist, psychologist, dentist, resident, intern, podiatrist, chiropractor, licensed nurse, dental hygienist, optometrist, marriage and family therapist, clinical social worker, professional clinical counselor, or any other person who is currently licensed under Division 2 (commencing with Section 500) of the Business and Professions Code.~~

~~(22)An emergency medical technician I or II, paramedic, or other person certified pursuant to Division 2.5 (commencing with Section 1797) of the Health and Safety Code.~~

~~(23)A psychological assistant registered pursuant to Section 2913 of the Business and Professions Code.~~

~~(24)A marriage and family therapist trainee, as defined in subdivision (c) of Section 4980.03 of the Business and Professions Code.~~

~~(25)An unlicensed associate marriage and family therapist registered under Section 4980.44 of the Business and Professions Code.~~

~~(26)A state or county public health employee who treats a minor for venereal disease or any other condition.~~

~~(27)A coroner.~~

~~(28)A medical examiner or other person who performs autopsies.~~

~~(29)A commercial film and photographic print or image processor as specified in subdivision (e) of Section 11166. As used in this article, "commercial film and photographic print or image processor" means a person who develops exposed photographic film into negatives, slides, or prints, or who makes prints from negatives or slides, or who prepares, publishes, produces, develops, duplicates, or prints any representation of information, data, or an image, including, but not limited to, any film, filmstrip, photograph, negative, slide, photocopy, videotape, video laser disc, computer hardware, computer software, computer floppy disk, data storage medium, CD-ROM, computer-generated equipment, or computer-generated image, for compensation. The term includes any employee of that person; it does not include a person who develops film or makes prints or images for a public agency.~~

~~(30)A child visitation monitor. As used in this article, "child visitation monitor" means a person who, for financial compensation, acts as a monitor of a visit between a child and another person when the monitoring of that visit has been ordered by a court of law.~~

~~(31)An animal control officer or humane society officer. For the purposes of this article, the following terms have the following meanings:~~

~~(A)"Animal control officer" means a person employed by a city, county, or city and county for the purpose of enforcing animal control laws or regulations.~~

~~(B)"Humane society officer" means a person appointed or employed by a public or private entity as a humane officer who is qualified pursuant to Section 14502 or 14503 of the Corporations Code.~~

~~(32)A clergy member, as specified in subdivision (d) of Section 11166. As used in this article, "clergy member" means a priest, minister, rabbi, religious practitioner, or similar functionary of a church, temple, or recognized denomination or organization.~~

~~(33)Any custodian of records of a clergy member, as specified in this section and subdivision (d) of Section 11166.~~

~~(34)An employee of any police department, county sheriff's department, county probation department, or county welfare department.~~

~~(35)An employee or volunteer of a Court Appointed Special Advocate program, as defined in Rule 5.655 of the California Rules of Court.~~

~~(36)A custodial officer, as defined in Section 831.5.~~

~~(37)A person providing services to a minor child under Section 12300 or 12300.1 of the Welfare and Institutions Code.~~

~~(38)An alcohol and drug counselor. As used in this article, an "alcohol and drug counselor" is a person providing counseling, therapy, or other clinical services for a state licensed or certified drug, alcohol, or drug and alcohol treatment program. However, alcohol or drug abuse, or both alcohol and drug abuse, is not, in and of itself, a sufficient basis for reporting child abuse or neglect.~~

~~(39)A clinical counselor trainee, as defined in subdivision (g) of Section 4999.12 of the Business and Professions Code.~~

~~(40)An associate professional clinical counselor registered under Section 4999.42 of the Business and Professions Code.~~

~~(41)An employee or administrator of a public or private postsecondary educational institution, whose duties bring the administrator or employee into contact with children on a regular basis, or who supervises those whose duties bring the administrator or employee into contact with children on a regular basis, as to child abuse or neglect occurring on that institution's premises or at an official activity of, or program conducted by, the institution. Nothing in this paragraph shall be construed as altering the lawyer client privilege as set forth in Article 3 (commencing with Section 950) of Chapter 4 of Division 8 of the Evidence Code.~~

~~(42)An athletic coach, athletic administrator, or athletic director employed by any public or private school that provides any combination of instruction for kindergarten, or grades 1 to 12, inclusive.~~

~~(43)(A)A commercial computer technician as specified in subdivision (e) of Section 11166. As used in this article, "commercial computer technician" means a person who works for a company that is in the business of repairing, installing, or otherwise servicing a computer or computer component, including, but not limited to, a computer part, device, memory storage or recording mechanism, auxiliary storage recording or memory capacity, or any other material relating to the operation and maintenance of a computer or computer network system, for a fee. An employer who provides an electronic communications service or a remote computing service to the public shall be deemed to comply with this article if that employer complies with Section 2258A of Title 18 of the United States Code.~~

~~(B)An employer of a commercial computer technician may implement internal procedures for facilitating reporting consistent with this article. These procedures may direct employees who are mandated reporters under this paragraph to report materials described in subdivision (e) of Section 11166 to an employee who is designated by the employer to receive the reports. An employee who is designated to receive reports under this subparagraph shall be a commercial computer technician for purposes of this article. A commercial computer technician who makes a report to the designated employee pursuant to this subparagraph shall be deemed to have complied with the requirements of this article and shall be subject to the protections afforded to mandated reporters, including, but not limited to, those protections afforded by Section 11172.~~

~~(44)Any athletic coach, including, but not limited to, an assistant coach or a graduate assistant involved in coaching, at public or private postsecondary educational institutions.~~

~~(45)An individual certified by a licensed foster family agency as a certified family home, as defined in Section 1506 of the Health and Safety Code.~~

~~(46)An individual approved as a resource family, as defined in Section 1517 of the Health and Safety Code and Section 16519.5 of the Welfare and Institutions Code.~~

~~(47)A qualified autism service provider, a qualified autism service professional, or a qualified autism service paraprofessional, as defined in Section 1374.73 of the Health and Safety Code and Section 10144.51 of the Insurance Code.~~

~~(48)A human resource employee of a business subject to Part 2.8 (commencing with Section 12900) of Division 3 of Title 2 of the Government Code that employs minors. For purposes of this section, a "human resource employee" is the employee or employees designated by the employer to accept any complaints of misconduct as required by Chapter 6 (commencing with~~

Section 12940) of Part 2.8 of Division 3 of Title 2 of the Government Code.

~~(49)An adult person whose duties require direct contact with and supervision of minors in the performance of the minors' duties in the workplace of a business subject to Part 2.8 (commencing with Section 12900) of Division 3 of Title 2 of the Government Code is a mandated reporter of sexual abuse, as defined in Section 11165.1. Nothing in this paragraph shall be construed to modify or limit the person's duty to report known or suspected child abuse or neglect when the person is acting in some other capacity that would otherwise make the person a mandated reporter.~~

~~(b)Except as provided in paragraph (35) of subdivision (a), volunteers of public or private organizations whose duties require direct contact with and supervision of children are not mandated reporters but are encouraged to obtain training in the identification and reporting of child abuse and neglect and are further encouraged to report known or suspected instances of child abuse or neglect to an agency specified in Section 11165.9.~~

~~(c)(1)Except as provided in subdivision (d) and paragraph (2), employers are strongly encouraged to provide their employees who are mandated reporters with training in the duties imposed by this article. This training shall include training in child abuse and neglect identification and training in child abuse and neglect reporting. Whether or not employers provide their employees with training in child abuse and neglect identification and reporting, the employers shall provide their employees who are mandated reporters with the statement required pursuant to subdivision (a) of Section 11166.5.~~

~~(2)Employers subject to paragraphs (48) and (49) of subdivision (a) shall provide their employees who are mandated reporters with training in the duties imposed by this article. This training shall include training in child abuse and neglect identification and training in child abuse and neglect reporting. The training requirement may be met by completing the general online training for mandated reporters offered by the Office of Child Abuse Prevention in the State Department of Social Services.~~

~~(d)Pursuant to Section 44691 of the Education Code, school districts, county offices of education, state special schools and diagnostic centers operated by the State Department of Education, and charter schools shall annually train their employees and persons working on their behalf specified in subdivision (a) in the duties of mandated reporters under the child abuse reporting laws. The training shall include, but not necessarily be limited to, training in child abuse and neglect identification and child abuse and neglect reporting.~~

~~(e)(1)On and after January 1, 2018, pursuant to Section 1596.8662 of the Health and Safety Code, a childcare licensee applicant shall take training in the duties of mandated reporters under the child abuse reporting laws as a condition of licensure, and a childcare administrator or an employee of a licensed child daycare facility shall take training in the duties of mandated reporters during the first 90 days when that administrator or employee is employed by the facility.~~

~~(2)A person specified in paragraph (1) who becomes a licensee, administrator, or employee of a licensed child daycare facility shall take renewal mandated reporter training every two years following the date on which that person completed the initial mandated reporter training. The training shall include, but not necessarily be limited to, training in child abuse and neglect identification and child abuse and neglect reporting.~~

~~(f)Unless otherwise specifically provided, the absence of training shall not excuse a mandated reporter from the duties imposed by this article.~~

~~(g)Public and private organizations are encouraged to provide their volunteers whose duties require direct contact with and supervision of children with training in the identification and reporting of child abuse and neglect.~~

~~(h)(1)Except as provided in subdivision (g), all employers of mandated reporters described in subdivision (a) shall require that the mandated reporters they employ receive training created pursuant to Section 18950.1 of the Welfare and Institutions Code within the first three months of their employment, or on or before March 1, 2030, whichever is later.~~

~~(2)The State Department of Social Services may audit records of any agency or organization employing a mandated reporter to ensure compliance with paragraph (1). If an employer violates this subdivision, the department may seek a court order requiring the employer to comply with these requirements.~~

SEC. 2.Section 10606.4 is added to the Welfare and Institutions Code, to read:

~~10606.4.It is the intent of the Legislature to enact legislation requiring the State Department of Social Services to incorporate an assessment of the capacity of community supports and services.~~

SEC. 3.Section 10606.5 is added to the Welfare and Institutions Code, to read:

~~10606.5.(a)The State Department of Social Services shall, in consultation with the Mandated Reporting Advisory Committee, monitor disparities in the child welfare system.~~

~~(b)(1)On or before January 1, 2027, the department shall submit a report to the Legislature on disparities in the child welfare~~

system.

~~(2) On or before January 1, 2027, the department shall submit a report to the Legislature on the development of the training pursuant to Section 18950.1 with policy recommendations to encourage compliance with subdivision (h) of Section 11165.7 of the Penal Code.~~

~~(c)(1) A report to be submitted pursuant to subdivision (b) shall be submitted in compliance with Section 9795 of the Government Code.~~

~~(2) Pursuant to Section 10231.5 of the Government Code, this section is repealed on January 1, 2031.~~

~~SEC. 4.~~ **SECTION 1.** Section 16504 of the Welfare and Institutions Code is amended to read:

16504. (a) ~~(1)~~ Any child reported to the county child welfare services department to be endangered by abuse, neglect, or exploitation shall be eligible for initial intake and evaluation of risk services. Each county child welfare services department shall maintain and operate a 24-hour response system. An immediate in-person response shall be made by a county child welfare services department social worker in emergency situations in accordance with regulations of the department. The person making any initial response to a request for child welfare services shall consider providing appropriate social services to maintain the child safely in their own home. However, an in-person response is not required when the county child welfare services department, based upon an evaluation of risk, determines that an in-person response is not appropriate. An evaluation of risk includes collateral contacts, a review of previous referrals, and other relevant information.

~~(2) County child welfare services departments shall ensure that all child welfare department social workers operating the county's response system receive training pursuant to Section 18950.1.~~

(b) A county child welfare services department social worker shall make an in-person response whenever a referral is received pursuant to Section 11254. Whenever a referral is received pursuant to Section 11254, the county child welfare services department social worker, within 20 calendar days from the receipt of the referral, shall determine whether the physical or emotional health or safety of the individual or child would be jeopardized if the individual and child lived in the same residence with the individual's own parent or legal guardian, or other adult relative.

(c) Notwithstanding Article 2.5 (commencing with Section 11164) of Chapter 2 of Title 1 of Part 4 of the Penal Code, any nonminor dependent, as described in subdivision (v) of Section 11403, reported to the county welfare services department to be endangered by abuse, neglect, or exploitation by a licensed or approved caregiver while in a foster care placement shall be eligible for evaluation of risk services, to determine if the placement is safe and appropriate. The county child welfare services department shall cross-report the suspected abuse, neglect, or exploitation by the licensed or approved caregiver to the appropriate licensing or approval agency and, as appropriate, to law enforcement.

(d) Notwithstanding any other law, county child welfare services departments do not need to substantiate or have allegations of abuse, neglect, or exploitation in order to provide services and stabilization support.

~~SEC. 5.~~ **SEC. 2.** Section 16544.5 is added to the Welfare and Institutions Code, to read:

16544.5. The California Child Welfare Council, through its Prevention and Early Intervention Committee, shall establish a Mandated Reporting Advisory Committee (MRAC). The MRAC shall include, but not be limited to, representatives of county agencies, labor organizations, community-based organizations, and parents and youth directly impacted by the child welfare system. It is the intent of the Legislature that the MRAC ensure the transformation of mandated reporting to community supporting continues and disparities in the child welfare system are eliminated.

~~SEC. 6.~~ **SEC. 3.** Section 16587 of the Welfare and Institutions Code is amended to read:

16587. (a) A county may elect to provide the prevention services under this chapter by providing a written plan to the State Department of Social Services, in accordance with instructions issued by the department. The written plan shall include the county's plans to provide information for mandated reporters regarding the resources available to support families in their communities. A county shall promptly notify the department of any changes to the written plan, including, but not limited to, an elimination or reduction of services. During the first year of implementation, a county may elect to provide the prevention services under this chapter by providing a written notice to the department while the county continues to develop its written plan. The county shall consult with other relevant county agencies that serve families and children, Indian tribes, local community representatives, caseworkers, and individuals and families with lived experience with the child welfare system in the development and ongoing implementation of the plan.

(b) The department shall consult with Indian tribes on the development of the statewide prevention plan, associated allocation policies, and procedures for an Indian tribe, consortium of tribes, or tribal organization that has entered into an agreement with the state pursuant to Section 10553.1 to elect to provide the prevention services under this chapter.

(c) (1) A county or Indian tribe, consortium of tribes, or tribal organization that has entered into an agreement with the state pursuant to Section 10553.1 that elects to provide prevention services under this chapter may provide those services for all of the following:

(A) A child who is a candidate for foster care.

(B) A child or nonminor dependent in foster care who is a pregnant or parenting foster youth.

(C) The parents or kin caregivers of a child described in this paragraph.

(2) (A) Prevention services under this chapter may be provided for a period of up to 12 months.

(B) Prevention services under this chapter may be provided for additional 12-month periods, including contiguous 12-month periods, on a case-by-case basis, when a county or tribal caseworker determines and documents in the candidate for foster care or pregnant or parenting foster youth's prevention plan that they continue to meet the requirements to receive prevention services as a candidate for foster care, or pregnant or parenting foster youth.

(C) Nothing in this subdivision shall be construed to alter or limit the time period for services provided under the Medi-Cal program to a Medi-Cal beneficiary, which shall be based on medical necessity.

(3) When a county knows or has reason to know a child is an Indian child, as defined in Section 224.1, the county shall provide prevention services under this chapter in a manner consistent with active efforts, as described in subdivision (f) of Section 224.1.

(d) A Title IV-E agency that elects to provide the prevention services under this chapter shall be responsible for:

(1) (A) Determining whether a child is a candidate for foster care and eligible for prevention services based upon an in-person assessment, or an alternative assessment methodology approved by the State Department of Social Services.

(B) Identifying whether a child or nonminor dependent in foster care is a pregnant or parenting foster youth who will receive prevention services. A candidacy assessment and determination are not required for a pregnant or parenting foster youth to receive prevention services.

(2) Documenting the determination described in paragraph (1) in the child or youth's prevention plan.

(3) Inquiring whether a child who is being assessed as a candidate for foster care and for prevention services under this chapter is or may be an Indian child in accordance with Section 224.2. When the county knows or has reason to know the child is an Indian child, as defined in Section 224.1, the county shall provide written notification to the tribe inviting the child's tribe to partner with the county agency in the initial and ongoing assessments of the child and family and the development and implementation of the written prevention plan.

(4) (A) Developing and implementing a written prevention plan for the child or youth using a model approved by the department.

(B) In the case of a child who is a candidate for foster care, the prevention plan shall identify the foster care prevention strategy for the child and list the services or programs to be provided to, or on behalf of, the child, including the services or programs to be provided to the child's parent or kin caregiver.

(C) In the case of a pregnant or parenting foster youth, the prevention plan shall list the services or programs to be provided to, or on behalf of, the youth to meet their individual needs, strengthen their ability to parent, describe the parenting support strategy to promote the health and development of, and prevent foster care for, any child born to the youth, and be included in the youth's existing case plan.

(D) In the case of an Indian child, the development and implementation of the written prevention plan shall be in partnership with the Indian child's tribe.

(5) Documenting all prevention services cases under this chapter in accordance with instructions issued by the department to county Title IV-E agencies.

(6) Ensuring that prevention services are provided using a trauma-informed approach, including an approach informed by historical and multigenerational trauma.

(7) Monitoring the safety of a candidate for foster care or pregnant or parenting foster youth receiving prevention services under this chapter, which shall include in-person contact with the child or youth by the caseworker to ensure the child's or youth's ongoing safety, as specified in the written prevention plan.

(8) Conducting periodic risk assessments for the child or youth while prevention services are being provided. The caseworker shall reexamine the prevention plan if they determine the risk of the child or youth entering foster care remains high despite the provision of prevention services. In the case of an Indian child, the assessments and any reexamination of the prevention plan shall be conducted in partnership with the Indian child's tribe.

(9) Collecting and reporting any information or data necessary to the department for federal financial participation, federal reporting, or evaluation of the services provided, including, but not limited to, child-specific information and expenditure data.

(10) Continuously monitoring the implementation and provision of services provided under this chapter to ensure fidelity to the practice model, determine outcomes achieved, and determine how information learned from monitoring will be used to refine and improve practices, using a continuous quality improvement framework developed in accordance with instructions issued by the department to county Title IV-E agencies. Outcomes achieved shall include, but are not limited to, measures examining the equitable implementation and provision of services, as well as equitable distribution of outcomes.

(11) (A) Conducting or contracting for a well-designed and rigorous evaluation of each prevention service provided under this chapter, as coordinated by the department and in accordance with instructions issued by the department to county Title IV-E agencies. An evaluation shall examine the effectiveness of each service in improving outcomes for children and families across diverse groups receiving each service. The department shall consult with the State Department of Health Care Services on any instructions to counties that involve an evaluation of a prevention service that is paid for by Medi-Cal.

(B) This paragraph shall not apply to a prevention service for which the state has received a federal waiver of the evaluation requirements pursuant to Section 471(e)(5) of the federal Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. Sec. 671(e)(5)).

(C) Subject to the availability of state or other funds, the department may conduct or contract for a well-designed and rigorous evaluation of a prevention service as described in subparagraph (A). A Title IV-E agency's participation in an evaluation of a prevention service by the department shall satisfy the agency's responsibility under this paragraph.

(e) A Title IV-E agency may contract with another agency or community-based organization to perform the activities described in paragraphs (4) through (8), inclusive, of subdivision (d) in accordance with guidelines and instructions issued by the department. The county shall be responsible for supervising and ensuring appropriate performance of these activities. A county may work with one or more other counties utilizing the same prevention service to conduct a joint evaluation that meets the requirements of this section.

(f) A parent, caregiver, child, or youth's nonparticipation in or noncompletion of offered prevention services, in and of itself, shall not be prima facie evidence that the child comes within Section 300 or prima facie evidence of substantial danger.

SEC. 7. SEC. 4. Section 16589 of the Welfare and Institutions Code is amended to read:

16589. (a) The State Department of Social Services shall have oversight of the Family First Prevention Services program established under this chapter. The department shall consult with the State Department of Health Care Services on any letters or instructions for the Family First Prevention Services program that intersect with services under the Medi-Cal program. Notwithstanding the rulemaking provisions of the Administrative Procedure Act (Chapter 3.5 (commencing with Section 11340) of Part 1 of Division 3 of Title 2 of the Government Code), the department may implement, interpret, or make specific this chapter by means of all-county letters or similar written instructions from the department until regulations are adopted. These all-county letters or similar written instructions shall have the same force and effect as regulations until the adoption of regulations.

(b) (1) Nothing in this chapter shall be construed to amend or otherwise alter state and federal requirements for Medi-Cal services. The State Department of Health Care Services shall maintain oversight over services claimed to the Medi-Cal program and shall be responsible for seeking any approvals necessary for the Medi-Cal program. The State Department of Health Care Services may provide guidance on whether federal financial participation is available for Medi-Cal services that may intersect with the implementation of prevention services under Part I of the federal Family First Prevention Services Act. Medi-Cal services shall only be claimed to the extent that any necessary federal approvals are obtained and medical assistance federal financial participation is available and is not otherwise jeopardized. Notwithstanding Chapter 3.5 (commencing with Section 11340) of Part 1 of Division 3 of Title 2 of the Government Code, the State Department of Health Care Services may provide Medi-Cal guidance to implement this chapter by means of plan or all-county letters, information notices, plan or provider bulletins, or other similar instructions, without taking any further regulatory action.

(2) The State Department of Social Services and State Department of Health Care Services shall jointly provide an update to the Assembly Committee on Budget and the Senate Committee on Budget and Fiscal Review, and to the subcommittees that

have oversight of human services, on or before April 1, 2026, and every 90 days thereafter, on guidance to counties with respect to payer of last resort federal requirements and revenue maximization of Medicaid and Title IV-E funding to support services within this chapter. This subdivision shall become inoperative upon findings by the Assembly Committee on Budget and the Senate Committee on Budget and Fiscal Review, that this requirement has been satisfied.

(c) (1) Notwithstanding any other law, contracts awarded by the State Department of Social Services for purposes of this chapter shall be exempt from the personal services contracting requirements of Article 4 (commencing with Section 19130) of Chapter 5 of Part 2 of Division 5 of Title 2 of the Government Code, the Public Contract Code, and the State Contracting Manual, and shall not be subject to the review or approval of the Department of General Services.

(2) This subdivision shall become inoperative on July 1, 2028, unless a later enacted statute, that becomes operative on or before July 1, 2028, deletes or extends the date on which this subdivision becomes inoperative.

~~SEC. 8.~~ **SEC. 5.** Section 18950.1 is added to the Welfare and Institutions Code, to read:

18950.1. (a) The Legislature finds and declares all of the following:

(1) Current mandatory reporting laws have resulted in a significant increase in the number of reports made with no corresponding evidence that children are safer.

(2) The harm and trauma of unnecessary reporting falls disproportionately on Black/African American and Native American/Indigenous children and families.

(3) ~~It is the intent of the Legislature. Therefore,~~ to eliminate the disproportionate surveillance and reporting of Black/African American, Native American/Indigenous, and Latino families and communities, thereby leading to an environment of antiracism in support of all children and ~~families.~~ *families, it is the intent of the Legislature that training be fully implemented regarding the definition of general neglect, as defined in Section 11165.2 of the Penal Code, and that investigations of general neglect by child welfare agencies as referred by mandated reporters emphasize community-based supports and family preservation services to reduce disparities and disproportionality in the child welfare system.*

~~(4) It is the intent of the Legislature that training be fully implemented regarding the definition of general neglect, as amended by Chapter 770 of the Statutes of 2022, and that investigations of general neglect by child welfare agencies as referred by mandated reporters emphasizes community-based supports and family preservation services to reduce disparities and disproportionality in the child welfare system.~~

(4) It is the intent of the Legislature to enact legislation to clarify statutes to allow for the sharing of information across agencies through a multidisciplinary team approach to serve children and families to prevent foster care entry.

(b) The department, through the State Office of Child Abuse Prevention, with participation of individuals with lived expertise, county child welfare agencies, and other stakeholders, shall, by no later than July 1, 2027, develop a standardized curriculum for mandated reporters. The curriculum shall reflect the intent of the Legislature in subdivision (a) and shall include, but not be limited to, all of the following:

(1) History of mandated reporting laws, including the impact of structural racism ~~on disparities for~~ *resulting in a disproportionate number of* Black and Indigenous ~~families.~~ *families involved in the child welfare services system.*

(2) The Federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act.

(3) California's Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Act in Article 2.5 (commencing with Section 11164) of Chapter 2 of Title 1 of Part 4 of the Penal Code.

(4) Best practice for defining "reasonable suspicion" and "substantial risk."

(5) Differences between ~~"severe" and "general" neglect~~ *"severe neglect" and "general neglect"* as defined in 11165.2 of the Penal Code.

(6) California child abuse, neglect, and disproportionality data.

(7) Definitions of "bias," including "implicit," and "explicit," bias, and "trauma," the impact of bias and trauma on families and children, and strategies for recognizing and mitigating their impact.

(8) The impact on families of making a child abuse or neglect report to child protective services.

(9) Considerations for special populations, including individuals with disabilities, behavioral health, domestic violence, and substance use concerns, as well as the unique factors involved in supporting children 0 to 5 years of age.

(10) Decisionmaking processes and tools for mandated reporters, including case examples of general neglect and severe neglect as those terms are defined in Section 11165.2 of the Penal Code.

(11) Education and information on community resources, community-based organizations, and other government agencies that can provide support to families in need.

(c) The department shall make the training available on its internet website.

(d) (1) Except as provided in paragraph (2), an employer having one or more mandated reporters, as described in subdivision (a) of Section 11165.7 of the Penal Code, shall ensure completion of the training created by this section within the first three months of their employment, or on or before March 1, 2030, whichever is later. Completion of the training shall be documented in a manner that would allow the department to verify completion upon request.

(2) The training required by this section shall not apply to any of the following:

(A) Volunteers whose duties require direct contact with and supervision of children, as described in subdivision (g) of Section 11165.7 of the Penal Code.

(B) Any mandated reporter under Section 11165.7 of the Penal Code who is otherwise required by law to receive training in child abuse and neglect identification and training in child abuse and neglect reporting.

~~(d)~~

(e) For the purposes of this chapter, "California child abuse, neglect, and disproportionality data" means data documented by the California Child Welfare Indicators Project.

~~SEC. 9. It is the intent of the Legislature to enact legislation to clarify statutes to allow for the sharing of information across agencies through a multidisciplinary team approach to serve children and families to prevent foster care entry.~~

~~SEC. 10.~~ **SEC. 6.** If the Commission on State Mandates determines that this act contains costs mandated by the state, reimbursement to local agencies and school districts for those costs shall be made pursuant to Part 7 (commencing with Section 17500) of Division 4 of Title 2 of the Government Code.