

Senate Bill 1515 Ensuring Children are Safe

Summary

On April 4, 2016, Governor Kate Brown signed Senate Bill 1515 into law. The legislation is designed to make residential care safer for children. The law demands changes in the way the Department of Human Services (DHS) regulates child caring agencies (CCA) and responds to reports of abuse or neglect to ensure children are safe, their needs are met and they are well cared for. The safety and well-being of children in the Department's care is a priority.

Changes DHS is making to implement Senate Bill 1515:

Oversight of CCAs

- Doubling the number of inspections from one every two years to one per year
- Expanding oversight to include review of CCA finances, and requiring agencies to submit audited financial statements and tax compliance certificates

Background Checks for Proctor Foster Home Applicants

- Requiring proctor foster home applicants to authorize DHS to release any information it may have about an applicant's abuse and neglect history to the CCA
- Providing CCAs more information about the abuse and neglect history of a foster parent applicant

Tools to Enforce Child Safety Requirements

- Implementing civil penalties against non-compliant CCAs to enforce child safety requirements
- Developing clear guidelines about when to
 - Place conditions or restrictions on the license of a non-compliant CCAs
 - Require corrective actions by a non-compliant CCAs
 - Suspend or revoke licensure for failure to meet child safety requirements

Transparency and Leadership Accountability

- Requiring all Department staff to notify the Director or designated staff when there is suspected child abuse or neglect in a CCA
- Requiring notifications to external stakeholder when there is suspected child abuse or neglect in a CCA
- Making failure to report suspected child abuse or neglect a crime
- Making failure to take action on suspected child abuse or neglect a crime