
**Human Services, Youth, & Early
Learning Committee**

ESB 5691

Brief Description: Concerning resource and assessment centers.

Sponsors: Senators Warnick and Shewmake.

Brief Summary of Engrossed Bill

- Allows resource and assessment centers (RACs) to be financially dependent on the state to operate.
- Allows RACs to provide care for children up to age 17 for up to three business days, and to address placement disruptions for children who have not been removed from a foster home because of the child's behavior or safety concerns.

Hearing Date: 3/21/23

Staff: Luke Wickham (786-7146).

Background:

Resource and Assessment Centers.

A Resource and Assessment Center (RAC) provides short-term emergency and crisis care for a period up to 72 hours, excluding Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays to children who have been removed from their parent's or guardian's care by the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) Child Protective Services and/or law enforcement. An RAC may:

- provide care for children birth through age 12, or for children ages 13 through 17 who have a sibling or siblings under age 13 who are being admitted to the RAC;
- operate up to 24 hours a day, and up to seven days per week; and

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- not be used to address placement disruptions for children who have been removed from a foster home because of behavior or safety concerns.

The DCYF may provide a license to an RAC if:

- there is a demonstrated need in the community;
- the RAC will be primarily staffed by trained volunteers; and
- the RAC is not financially dependent on reimbursement from the state to operate.

The licensing rules for an RAC allow:

- a sufficient number of trained volunteers to meet the staffing requirements;
- flexibility in hours of operation that allow the RAC to close if there are no children in its care; and
- the ability to operate in a residential area.

Summary of Bill:

The RACs are no longer required to demonstrate that they are not dependent on reimbursement from the state to operate.

The RACs may:

- provide care for children birth through age 17 at the discretion of the RAC (instead of birth through age 12, and children ages 13 through 17 who have a sibling at the RAC);
- provide care for children for up to three business days, or up to seven business days with the approval of the DCYF (instead of up to 72 hours, excluding weekends and holidays); and
- be used to provide emergency initial care for children as they enter care and respite care, and address placement disruptions for children who have not been removed from a foster home because of behavior or safety concerns.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.