

# ASSEMBLY, No. 3975

## STATE OF NEW JERSEY 219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED MAY 4, 2020

**Sponsored by:**

**Assemblywoman AURA K. DUNN**

**District 25 (Morris and Somerset)**

**Assemblywoman VALERIE VAINIERI HUTTLE**

**District 37 (Bergen)**

**Assemblywoman ANGELA V. MCKNIGHT**

**District 31 (Hudson)**

**SYNOPSIS**

Requires DCF and DOE to provide certain child abuse and neglect services or information remotely or through distance learning mechanisms.

**CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT**

As introduced.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 5/5/2021)

1 AN ACT concerning child abuse and neglect and supplementing  
2 Title 9 and Title 18A of the Revised Statutes.

3

4 **BE IT ENACTED** by the Senate and General Assembly of the State  
5 of New Jersey:

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7 1. For the duration of the public health emergency declared  
8 pursuant to P.L.2005, c.222 (C.26:13-1 et seq.) in response to the  
9 coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), the Department of Children  
10 and Families shall establish procedures to allow:

11 a. a child under its care, custody, and supervision and the  
12 child's family to access certain services required by a case plan  
13 remotely by telephone, computer, or other means of live audio or  
14 video communication; and

15 b. a permanency worker assigned to a child under the  
16 department's care, custody, and supervision to provide certain case  
17 management services remotely by telephone, computer, or other  
18 means of live audio or video communication.

19 c. The services accessed by a child under the department's  
20 care, custody, and supervision and the child's family pursuant to  
21 subsection a. of this section may include, but not be limited to:

22 (1) crisis intervention;

23 (2) emergency medical, mental health, and substance use  
24 treatment services;

25 (3) financial assistance; and

26 (4) housing assistance and advocacy.

27 d. The case management services provided by a permanency  
28 worker pursuant to subsection b. of this section may include, but  
29 not be limited to:

30 (1) regular interviews with the child and the child's parent;

31 (2) an assessment of the child's condition of the child to  
32 determine if the child is receiving adequate, safe and appropriate  
33 food, clothing and housing, and medical care; and

34 (3) a determination of the progress of the treatment and services,  
35 provided to the child and the child's family, and whether a revision  
36 of the child's case plan is necessary.

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38 2. For the duration of the public health emergency declared  
39 pursuant to P.L.2005, c.222 (C.26:13-1 et seq.) in response to the  
40 coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), the Department of  
41 Education, in consultation with the Department of Children and  
42 Families, shall:

43 a. offer Statewide educational instruction through distance  
44 learning media, including, but not limited to, video and audio tapes  
45 or Internet education programs, on the problems of child abuse and  
46 neglect and appropriate child abuse prevention techniques; and

1 b. require all school districts in the State to establish policies  
2 designed to ensure that each student enrolled in a public school  
3 offering educational instruction through distance learning is  
4 regularly attending school.

5 c. The instruction provided pursuant to subsection a. of this  
6 section shall enable elementary school, middle school and high  
7 school pupils and their families to:

8 (1) understand the psychology and dynamics of child abuse and  
9 neglect;

10 (2) provide information on the Department of Children and  
11 Families' State Central Registry, including instructions on calling  
12 911 for emergencies and directions for accessing the department's  
13 website or social media platforms for more information on reporting  
14 child abuse, neglect, and exploitation;

15 (3) provide information on the Department of Children and  
16 Families' Family Helpline and other telephone hotlines that offer  
17 peer support, clinical, and counseling services to children at risk of  
18 children abuse and neglect and their families; and

19 (4) provide information on State child abuse prevention  
20 programs and services; and

21 d. The policies designed by school districts pursuant to  
22 subsection b. of this section shall include provisions for:

23 (1) recording the attendance and excused absence of each  
24 student remotely by telephone, computer, or other means of live  
25 audio or video communication;

26 (2) a student's parent or guardian to notify the appropriate  
27 school personnel when the student will be absent from school  
28 remotely by telephone, computer or other means of live audio or  
29 video communication;

30 (3) the school to attempt to contact a student's parent or legal  
31 guardian, if a pupil is determined to be absent without valid excuse  
32 from school; and

33 (4) the circumstances under which the school shall contact the  
34 Department of Children and Families if the reason for a student's  
35 unexcused absence is unknown to the appropriate school personnel  
36 and attempts to contact the student's parent or guardian to  
37 determine the reason for the absence is unsuccessful.

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39 3. This act shall take effect immediately.

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STATEMENT

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44 This bill requires that during the public health emergency  
45 declared pursuant to P.L.2005, c.222 (C.26:13-1 et seq.) in response  
46 to the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), the Department of  
47 Children and Families (DCF) would establish procedures to allow: a

1 child under its care, custody, and supervision and the child's family  
2 to access the services required under a case plan remotely by  
3 telephone, computer, or other means of live audio or video  
4 communication; and a permanency worker, assigned to a child  
5 under the department's care, custody, and supervision, to provide  
6 the case management services, as appropriate, remotely by  
7 telephone, computer, or other means of live audio or video  
8 communication.

9 The services accessed by a child under the DCF's care, custody,  
10 and supervision and the child's family could include, but not be  
11 limited to: crisis intervention; emergency medical, mental health,  
12 and substance use treatment services; financial assistance; and  
13 housing assistance and advocacy. The case management services  
14 provided by a permanency worker could include, but not be limited  
15 to: regular interviews with the child and the child's parent; an  
16 assessment of the child's condition of the child to determine if the  
17 child is receiving adequate, safe and appropriate food, clothing and  
18 housing, and medical care; and a determination of the progress of  
19 the treatment and services, provided to the child and the child's  
20 family, and whether a revision of the child's case plan is necessary

21 The bill also requires that during the COVID-19 public health  
22 emergency, the Department of Education, in consultation with the  
23 DCF, would provide Statewide educational instruction through  
24 distance learning media, including, but not limited to, video and  
25 audio tapes or Internet education programs, on the problems of  
26 child abuse and neglect and appropriate child abuse prevention  
27 techniques.

28 The instruction would enable elementary school, middle school  
29 and high school pupils and their families to: understand the  
30 psychology and dynamics of child abuse and neglect; provide  
31 information on the DCF's State Central Registry, including  
32 instructions on calling 911 for emergencies, and directions for  
33 accessing the DCF's website or social media platforms for more  
34 information on reporting child abuse, neglect, and exploitation;  
35 provide information on the DCF's Family Helpline and other  
36 telephone hotlines that offer peer support, clinical, and counseling  
37 services to children at risk of child abuse and neglect and their  
38 families; and provide information on State child abuse prevention  
39 programs and services.

40 The bill's provisions also stipulate that during the COVID-19  
41 public health emergency, the DOE would require all school districts  
42 establish policies to ensure that each student enrolled in a public  
43 school offering educational instruction through distance learning is  
44 regularly attending school. The policies would include provisions  
45 for: recording the attendance and excused absence of each student  
46 remotely by telephone, computer, or other means of live audio or  
47 video communication; a student's parent or guardian to notify the

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1 appropriate school personnel when the student will be absent from  
2 school remotely by telephone, computer or other means of live  
3 audio or video communication; the school to attempt to contact a  
4 student's parent or legal guardian, if a pupil is determined to be  
5 absent without valid excuse from school; and the circumstances  
6 under which the school would contact the DCF if the reason for a  
7 student's unexcused absence is unknown to the appropriate school  
8 personnel and attempts to contact the student's parent or guardian to  
9 determine the reason for the absence is unsuccessful.