

House Bill 1414 Notification of Publication

In 2020 the General Assembly of the State of Missouri and the Governor enacted HB 1414 (2020) into law. The bill requires the implementation of several important reforms to Missouri's system for child protection. One of the many important components of this legislation is a requirement that the Children's Division establish a response and evaluation team to objectively review and evaluate foster care case management in Missouri. House Bill 1414 (2020) established the structure for this collaboration and set the goals for its implementation in which all stakeholders in the foster care system could partner to improve the system. The Bill requires the Children's Division to implement objective metrics to measure the quality of services for Missouri's children in foster care.

One of the key components of the legislation are amendments to §210.112 RSMo., which requires the Children's Division, among other things,

- To make the safety and welfare of children the paramount objective of the system;
- To establish a Research and Evaluation Team composed of the Children's Division and key stakeholders;
- To establish a uniform, transparent, objective and consistent tool to evaluate the provision of foster care case management services;
- To maximize the opportunity for successful outcome for children and families served by the system; and
- To promulgate regulations to implement the provisions of the law by July 1, 2021.

The Children's Division, in collaboration with the Research and Evaluation Team, promulgated the regulations in order to ensure implementation of the required legislation by the deadline set out in statute. The statute, coupled with the regulations, has established a detailed plan and timetable for implementation of the system and process required by the law. The Response and Evaluation Team, along with subcommittees, have been working steadily since HB 1414 was enacted in 2020 to implement the letter and spirit of the law.

The Children's Division's regulation requires the Children's Division to implement the research and evaluation process in phases beginning in 2022, with the publication of the proposed evaluation tool and metrics for Phase I on its website for review and comment on or before April 1, 2022.¹ Providers may recommend alternative metrics based on the best interests of the child. In making such recommendations the providers shall explain, in writing, how the alternative metrics are in the best interests of the child and promote the safety and welfare of children. The Division and the Research and Evaluation Team will review the comments, and the Research and Evaluation Team will submit recommendations based upon the comments within thirty (30) days of receipt of the comments. The Division will consider the public comments and recommendations of the Team, and publish final evaluation tools and metrics for Phase I on or before July 31, 2022.²

¹ 13 CSR 35-35.100(3)(B).

² Id.