

1 HB79  
2 196694-4  
3 By Representative Reynolds  
4 RFD: Children and Senior Advocacy  
5 First Read: 05-MAR-19  
6 PFD: 03/04/2019

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8 SYNOPSIS: Existing law provides for full membership in  
9 the Alabama Network of Children's Advocacy Centers  
10 for child advocacy centers that meet specified  
11 requirements.

12 This bill would expand and clarify the  
13 existing requirements for full membership in the  
14 Alabama Network of Children's Advocacy Centers for  
15 child advocacy centers that wish to apply; this  
16 bill would also update defined terms.

17  
18 A BILL  
19 TO BE ENTITLED  
20 AN ACT

21  
22 To amend Section 26-16-70, Code of Alabama 1975, to  
23 expand and clarify the existing requirements for full  
24 membership in the Alabama Network of Children's Advocacy  
25 Centers for child advocacy centers that wish to apply; and to  
26 update defined terms.

27 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA:

1           Section 1. Section 26-16-70, Code of Alabama 1975,  
2 is amended to read as follows:

3           "§26-16-70.

4           "(a) For purposes of this section, the following  
5 terms have the following meanings:

6           "(1) FORENSIC INTERVIEW. The same meaning as in  
7 Section 12-15-301.

8           "(2) LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES. The police  
9 department for the municipality and the sheriff's department  
10 for the county in which a child advocacy center is located.

11           "(3) MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONAL. An individual  
12 holding a master's or higher degree in social work, mental  
13 health counseling, or other social work related or mental  
14 health counseling related field of study, and who has received  
15 special training regarding child maltreatment and child  
16 trauma.

17           "(b) In order to become eligible for a full  
18 membership in the Alabama Network of Children's Advocacy  
19 Centers, Incorporated, child advocacy centers in this state  
20 shall:

21           "~~(1) Be a private, non-profit incorporated~~  
22 Incorporate as a nonprofit agency under the requirements of  
23 Section 10A-3-1.01 et seq.

24           "~~(2) Have~~ Utilize a neutral, child-focused facility  
25 where ~~joint Department of Human Resources and law enforcement~~  
26 forensic interviews, conducted jointly by the Department of  
27 Human Resources and law enforcement personnel, take place with

1 children in appropriate cases of suspected child sexual and  
2 physical abuse. All multidisciplinary agencies shall ~~have~~  
3 utilize a place facility to interact with the child as  
4 investigative or treatment needs require.

5 "(3) ~~Have a minimum~~ Employ or utilize designated  
6 staff that ~~is supervised and approved by~~ operate under the  
7 supervision and approval of the local board of directors of  
8 the child advocacy center.

9 "(4) ~~Having~~ Maintain a multidisciplinary ~~case review~~  
10 team that meets on a regularly scheduled basis or as the case  
11 load of the community requires to coordinate the  
12 multidisciplinary response to child abuse. ~~The~~ At a minimum,  
13 the team shall consist of ~~representatives from the district~~  
14 ~~attorney, the Department of Human Resources, mental health,~~  
15 ~~law enforcement, and the Child Advocacy Center staff.~~ Medical  
16 ~~personnel and a victim's advocate may be part of the team.~~ the  
17 following:

18 "a. The local district attorney, or his or her  
19 designee or designees.

20 "b. One or more representatives from the Department  
21 of Human Resources.

22 "c. One or more local mental health professionals.

23 "d. One or more representatives from a local law  
24 enforcement agency.

25 "e. The staff of the child advocacy center.

26 "(5) Provide case tracking of child abuse cases ~~seen~~  
27 worked through the center. ~~A center shall also~~ and, at a

1 minimum, collect demographic data on: ~~The number of child~~  
2 ~~abuse cases seen at the center by sex, race, age, and other~~  
3 ~~relevant data; the number of cases referred for prosecution;~~  
4 ~~and the number of cases referred for mental health therapy~~  
5 regarding all children referred to the center for services as  
6 well as any other data required by the Alabama Network of  
7 Child Advocacy Centers.

8 "(6) ~~Provide referrals for~~ Offer on-site medical  
9 exams and mental health therapy or provide referrals for  
10 off-site medical exams and mental health therapy. The center  
11 shall provide follow-up on cases referred for mental health  
12 therapy.

13 "(7) Provide training for ~~various disciplines~~  
14 multidisciplinary team members in the community that ~~deal with~~  
15 respond to cases of possible child abuse.

16 "(8) ~~Have~~ Participate in an interagency ~~commitment~~  
17 agreement covering those aspects of agency participation in a  
18 multidisciplinary approach to ~~the handling of~~ child sexual and  
19 serious physical abuse cases. The agreement must be signed by  
20 the following:

21 "a. The local district attorney, or his or her  
22 designee.

23 "b. A designee of the Department of Human Resources.

24 "c. A designee of a local law enforcement agency.

25 "d. The director of the child advocacy center.

26 "(9) Provide assurance that staff and volunteers at  
27 the center are trained and screened by appropriate resources

1 as specified by the Alabama Network of Children's Advocacy  
2 Centers."

3           Section 2. This act shall become effective on the  
4 first day of the third month following its passage and  
5 approval by the Governor, or its otherwise becoming law, and  
6 is contingent upon the passage of HB\_\_\_\_\_ of the 2019 Regular  
7 Session, relating to statements made by children during  
8 forensic interviews.