

**Number**  
#25-68-26

**Date**  
October 9, 2025

**Of interest to**  
County and Tribal Social  
Services Directors  
  
County and Tribal Social  
Services Supervisors and Staff  
  
County and Tribal Attorneys  
  
State District Court  
Administration  
  
Private Child-Placing Agency  
Supervisors and Staff

**Action/due date**  
Please read information and  
prepare for implementation.

**Expiration date**  
October 9, 2027

## Summary of 2025 child welfare legislation

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### Topic

Overview of 2025 child welfare legislation.

### Purpose

Provide a summary of 2025 legislative actions affecting delivery of child welfare services impacting children and families.

### Contact

Heidi Ombisa Skallet, legislative and policy coordinator,  
[heidi.ombisa.skallet@state.mn.us](mailto:heidi.ombisa.skallet@state.mn.us)

### Signed



REBECCA ST. GEORGE  
Assistant Commissioner  
Child Safety and Permanency Administration

### Terminology notice

The terminology used to describe people we serve has changed over time. The Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) supports the use of "People First" language.

## I. Background

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The 2025 legislature ended its regular session on May 20 with an incomplete budget established for the 2026-2027 biennium. The governor called a special session to wrap up the remaining elements of the state budget on June 9. This bulletin summarizes child welfare–related legislative and budget changes with law citations for reference. All legislative changes listed in this bulletin were effective July 1, 2025, unless otherwise specified.

Contact Child Safety and Permanency staff at the Minnesota Department for Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) for more information, including policy and practice implications, as follows:

- **General:** [dcyf.child.safety-permanency@state.mn.us](mailto:dcyf.child.safety-permanency@state.mn.us)
- African American child and family well-being: [dcyf.aacwb@state.mn.us](mailto:dcyf.aacwb@state.mn.us)
- American Indian Wellbeing Unit and Tribal child welfare: [dcyf.icwa.mifpa@state.mn.us](mailto:dcyf.icwa.mifpa@state.mn.us)
- Child mortality review panel and critical incident review: [dcyf.childfatalityreview@state.mn.us](mailto:dcyf.childfatalityreview@state.mn.us)
- Child safety and prevention: [dcyf.csp.safety@state.mn.us](mailto:dcyf.csp.safety@state.mn.us)
- Human Trafficking Child Protection program: [dcyf.safeharbor@state.mn.us](mailto:dcyf.safeharbor@state.mn.us)
- Foster care, CHIPS and protective supervision: [dcyf.csp.fostercare@state.mn.us](mailto:dcyf.csp.fostercare@state.mn.us)
- Foster youth transition services and extended foster care: [dcyf.csp.foster.youth.transitions@state.mn.us](mailto:dcyf.csp.foster.youth.transitions@state.mn.us)
- Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) Kinship Navigator Program, including temporary relative supports: [dcyf.csp.safety@state.mn.us](mailto:dcyf.csp.safety@state.mn.us)
- Permanency, guardianship and adoption, including Northstar Care for Children: [northstar.benefits@state.mn.us](mailto:northstar.benefits@state.mn.us)
- Post-adoption search and original birth record access for adult adopted persons: [betsy.hodek@state.mn.us](mailto:betsy.hodek@state.mn.us) and [search@fosteraadoptmn.org](http://search@fosteraadoptmn.org)
- Rapid consultation: [dcyf.csp.rapidconsult@state.mn.us](mailto:dcyf.csp.rapidconsult@state.mn.us)
- Title IV-E policy and eligibility: [dcyf.csp.4e@state.mn.us](mailto:dcyf.csp.4e@state.mn.us)
- Training via the Minnesota Child Welfare Training Academy: [info@mnchildwelfaretraining.com](mailto:info@mnchildwelfaretraining.com)

## II. Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF)

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DCYF was established as a new state agency on July 1, 2024 (see [Bulletin 24-68-13, Summary of 2024 child welfare legislation](#)). Legislation passed during the 2025 regular and first special sessions made several additional technical and clarifying changes related to transitioning DCYF programs from other state agencies, including:

- Correcting and adding statutory cross-references as applicable.
- Adding DCYF into membership lists for legislatively mandated councils and workgroups applicable to DCYF, such as the Minnesota Indian Affairs Council.
- Referencing the commissioner or DCYF, as applicable, in data privacy and records provisions that are under the purview of DCYF or state agencies as a whole, such as the Government Data Practices Act and birth registration information.

- Clarifying the role of DCYF among other state agencies in areas such as appeals, juvenile corrections, foster parent liability insurance, licensing, Minnesota Indian Family Preservation Act (MIFPA) and the Human Services Performance Management System.
- Ensuring continued applicability or non-applicability of various sections and chapters of Minnesota Statutes to DCYF, including that Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 256G, applies to programs under the purview of DCYF and that the Uniform Guardianship and Protective Proceedings Act does not apply to DCYF.

(Laws of Minnesota 2025, [Chapter 20](#) and [Chapter 21](#).)

## III. General child welfare

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### A. Inquiry of child's heritage, including Tribal lineage

Several technical modifications were made to Minnesota Statutes, Chapters 260C and 260E, to clarify the points at which inquiry and notice requirements under MIFPA must occur throughout a child's child welfare involvement. These modifications ensure that the protections afforded under MIFPA apply at the earliest point possible, that foster care and permanency placement decisions are made in accordance with state and federal laws governing placement of American Indian children, and that the court has the information it needs to provide oversight.

To support statewide implementation of the Minnesota African American Family Preservation and Child Welfare Disproportionality Act (MAAFPCWDA) in 2027, these technical updates were expanded to include inquiry of a child's heritage, particularly the child's race, culture, and ethnicity, when inquiry of Tribal lineage occurs. Like the technical modifications intended to strengthen MIFPA compliance, these modifications ensure MAAFPCWDA's protections apply at the earliest point possible, and the court has the information it needs to provide oversight.

Responsible social services agencies must ask about a child's heritage, including their Tribal lineage and their race, culture, and ethnicity, when:

- Receiving a report of child maltreatment.
- Conducting a child protection response.
- Filing a petition for a child in need of protection or services.
- Identifying, locating, and engaging parents of a child in juvenile protection proceedings.
- A child is removed from their parents' care and placed in foster care.
- Permanency planning for a child, including establishing a concurrent permanency plan. An agency must not designate a child's foster parent as a proposed adoptive parent or relative custodian until the agency has completed inquiry of a child's heritage, including Tribal lineage and their race, culture, and ethnicity, as well as Tribal notice requirements, and a court has determined the agency has made reasonable or active efforts toward completing relative search requirements.

(Laws of Minnesota 2025, First Special Session, [chapter 3](#), article 10, sections 13, 15-16, 23, 25-26, 32, 35.)

A court must ask about a child’s heritage, including Tribal lineage and their race, culture, and ethnicity, and an agency’s efforts to determine this information throughout a child’s case. In particular, the court must ask these questions when determining whether a child should be ordered into foster care and when reviewing an agency’s reasonable efforts to finalize a child’s permanency plan.

(Laws of Minnesota 2025, First Special Session, [chapter 3](#), article 10, sections 13, 17-19, and 23.)

## B. Technical updates

Several technical updates to MAAFPCWDA were made. These include clarifying:

- When courts order children into their noncustodial or nonadjudicated parents’ homes, it is not a foster care placement.
- A court’s authority to order an emergency removal to prevent a child’s imminent harm only applies to children, not parents and custodians.
- The names of the African American Child and Family Well-Being Advisory Council and the African American Child and Family Well-Being Unit.
- Advisory council membership, terms, compensation and removal of council members to ensure alignment with statutes governing advisory councils in general.

(Laws of Minnesota 2025, First Special Session, [chapter 3](#), article 10, sections 9-12.)

## C. Terminology changes

The legislature updated terminology across Minnesota Statutes that is also used or relates to the child welfare system. These are considered technical updates and do not have a substantive impact on practice. Specifically, it replaced:

- “Emotional disturbance” with “mental illness.”
- “Videotape” with “recording” in statutes related to data privacy, access to and disclosure of records, and criminal code procedures involving child abuse and neglect.
- “Pornographic work” with “child sexual abuse material” in statutes governing the criminal code and public safety.

(Laws of Minnesota 2025, [chapter 35](#), articles 4-5, and [chapter 38](#), article 8; Laws of Minnesota 2025, First Special Session, [chapter 9](#), article 9, section 6.)

## D. Funding for legal representation for children

The legislature appropriated \$100,000 in fiscal years 2026 and 2027 for an organization to provide legal representation for children in need of protection or services and children in out-of-home placement. This is a one-time appropriation.

(Laws of Minnesota 2025, [chapter 35](#), article 2, sec. 3, subdivision 7 (a).)

## E. Funding for a comprehensive child welfare information system

The legislature appropriated \$35 million to the commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Children, Youth, and Families to modernize Minnesota's Social Service Information System (SSIS) by acquiring, implementing, and configuring a data-driven and federally compliant comprehensive child welfare information system (CCWIS). Throughout the process, the commissioner must consult and collaborate with the commissioner of Minnesota IT Services (MNIT) and stakeholders, including frontline child protection workers, and engage in formal consultation with Minnesota Tribal governments.

Minimum requirements for modernization include:

- Meeting all federal and state requirements for CCWIS, including those outlined in [Bulletin #24-68-13, Summary of 2024 child welfare legislation](#).
- Providing statewide comprehensive data reports, including data on law enforcement involvement in child protection.
- Incorporating responsive design capabilities that provide access to the system from various electronic devices while ensuring data privacy and security.
- Collecting information and data necessary to ensure compliance with state and federal laws.
- Allowing for Tribal child welfare information systems integration to support data sharing while respecting Tribal data sovereignty.
- Addressing other critical system needs, including those that local social service agencies may identify.

The commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Children, Youth, and Families is required to submit a plan with an estimated timeline for CCWIS modernization to the legislature by March 15, 2026, with an update on efforts and progress by Aug. 15, 2026. Ongoing updates are required every Jan. 15 and July 15 thereafter, until the commissioner reports to the legislature that CCWIS modernization requirements have been substantially completed.

(Laws of Minnesota 2025, First Special Session, [chapter 3](#), article 11, section 6; and article 22, section 4, subdivision 2.)

## F. Indian child welfare grant modifications

Reporting timelines for Indian child welfare (ICW) grants under MIFPA were modified to provide greater flexibility and reduce administrative burden for Tribal Nations and urban Indian organizations receiving

grants. Rather than specifying reporting requirements and timelines applicable to all ICW grantees, the commissioner must engage Tribes and urban Indian organizations when establishing report requirements, including fiscal reports that have a minimum submission timeline of at least annually. Regardless of the reporting timeline established for an ICW grantee, grant payments must be made quarterly.

Additionally, the legislature eliminated a provision that specified \$100,000 as the maximum amount that could be awarded through a special focus grant. Removing this limitation means Tribes and urban Indian organizations can benefit from more flexible awards, allowing resources to be allocated more effectively and equitably across applicants.

(Laws of Minnesota 2025, First Special Session, [chapter 3](#), article 11, sections 2-4.)

## **IV. Child maltreatment and child protection**

### **A. Mandated reporter training updates**

The legislature modified training requirements for persons mandated to report child maltreatment. All mandated reporter training, regardless of who develops it, must dedicate at least half of the training time to identifying signs of suspected child maltreatment or abuse. It also must cover each maltreatment type's definition under Minnesota Statutes, section 260E.03, subdivision 12.

Mandated reporter trainings created by the commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Children, Youth, and Families, must be developed with input from professionals with specialized knowledge in the area of child maltreatment, such as medical professionals, attorneys, mental health professionals, and social workers.

(Laws of Minnesota 2025, [Chapter 13](#).)

### **B. Educational materials for parents of infants on signs of physical abuse**

The commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Health is required to consult with the commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Children, Youth, and Families to identify, approve, and make available educational materials that help parents and primary caregivers of infants recognize signs of physical abuse and how to report it. Pediatric primary care providers must provide these materials to parents and primary caregivers of infants up to six months of age at an infant's first well-baby visit after birth.

(Laws of Minnesota 2025, First Special Session, [chapter 3](#), article 1, section 47.)

### **C. Neglect definition updated to provide exception**

The definition of neglect was amended to provide an exception for children with mental, physical, or emotional conditions who are unable to be safely discharged home because they require services such

as residential treatment that are not available. This amendment is consistent with the [Minnesota Child Maltreatment Intake, Screening and Response Path Guidelines](#) and Laws of Minnesota 2023, [chapter 70](#), article 14, section 39. See also [Bulletin 24-68-03, Summary of 2023 child welfare legislation](#).

(Laws of Minnesota 2025, First Special Session, [chapter 3](#), article 10, section 31.)

## D. Fentanyl added to drug exposure crimes involving children

Effective Aug. 1, 2025, and applicable to crimes committed on or after Aug. 1, 2025, the governing statute for methamphetamine-related crimes involving children and vulnerable adults was expanded to prohibit a person from knowingly causing or allowing a child to inhale, be exposed to, have contact with, or ingest fentanyl. For more information, review the [Minnesota Child Maltreatment Intake, Screening and Response Path Guidelines](#).

(Laws of Minnesota 2025, [chapter 35](#), article 4, sections 5-6.)

## E. Student attendance, truancy, and educational neglect

The legislature established Minnesota Statute 120A.37 upon recommendation from the [Student Attendance and Truancy Legislative Study Group](#), a temporary work group established by the 2024 legislature. Its purpose is to list statutory cross-references to provisions governing student attendance, truancy, educational neglect, and related areas that are codified elsewhere.

(Laws of Minnesota 2025, First Special Session, [chapter 10](#), article 1, section 4.)

The legislature also made substantive changes that focus on ensuring school attendance concerns are reported in a timely manner to local welfare agencies and addressed in ways that support children and their families.

### 1. School attendance reporting requirements

The legislature added an attendance reporting provision to compulsory instruction requirements. Under the new provision, school districts must count students as in attendance for a given day if a student received supervision, instruction, or services from school staff during a school's scheduled school hours.

The legislature also added reporting and notification requirements for school principals, superintendents, school districts, and local welfare agencies to ensure students' continued enrollment in schools between academic terms. School districts must notify local welfare agencies when students are dropped from a school's enrollment list due to unexcused absences for more than 15 consecutive school days. Notices must contain the student's most recent contact information on file with the school. Local welfare agencies are then required to notify the school if they are not able to contact the student or the student's family.

(Laws of Minnesota 2025, First Special Session, [chapter 10](#), article 1, sections 2 and 3.)

## 2. Child welfare response established for reports of educational neglect

The legislature amended Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 260E, to establish and require local welfare agencies to proceed with a prevention-based child welfare response, instead of a child protection response, for initial reports of educational neglect involving children under the age of 12 with at least seven unexcused absences. A local welfare agency may partner with a community-based agency or its county attorney's office to provide child welfare services, which must be culturally and linguistically appropriate and tailored to the needs of children and their families. The legislature maintained mandated reporter requirements and voluntary reporting related to educational neglect.

This new approach ensures children and families do not needlessly enter the child protection system and that they receive resources and services to support continued school attendance. Should efforts fail after multiple, varied attempts to engage children and their families and unexcused absences continue, a subsequent report of educational neglect must be made, at which point a local welfare agency must determine the child protection response path according to Minnesota Statutes, section 260E.17.

To reduce confusion around whether a child is presumed to be habitually truant or educationally neglected, the definition of "habitual truant" under Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 260C, was amended to remove general inclusion of children under age 12 and in elementary school. Instead, the definition now clearly states that children under age 12 may also be considered habitually truant when the presumption of educational neglect is successfully rebutted pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, section 260C.163, subdivision 11.

(Laws of Minnesota 2025, First Special Session, [chapter 3](#), article 10, sections 14 and 39.)

## F. Out-of-state child maltreatment allegations

The responsibility of local welfare agencies to investigate allegations of child maltreatment was clarified to include situations in which the alleged maltreatment occurred in another state or country, provided the child is a Minnesota resident and the alleged offender is a parent, sibling, household member, or person functioning within the family unit. Statute governing a person's appeal rights following a maltreatment determination was modified to require appeals of maltreatment determinations involving out-of-state maltreatment allegations to be filed in the Minnesota county where the maltreatment was determined.

(Laws of Minnesota 2025, First Special Session, [chapter 3](#), article 10, sections 8, 33-34.)

## G. Noncaregiver human trafficking assessment technical fixes

Several sections of Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 260E, governing child protection response procedures and timelines were modified to be inclusive of noncaregiver human trafficking assessment procedures

and timelines. These were technical fixes to ensure alignment and consistency across the state, while accounting for certain exceptions for this type of assessment.

(Laws of Minnesota 2025, First Special Session, [chapter 3](#), article 10, sections 35-38.)

## H. Early Intensive Developmental and Behavioral Intervention (EIDBI) licensure

The legislature established provisional licensure for agencies enrolled under Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 256B, to provide Early Intensive Developmental and Behavioral Intervention (EIDBI) services, beginning Jan. 1, 2026. As the state agency responsible for this provisional licensure, the Department of Human Services is the agency responsible for screening and investigating reports of maltreatment of minors in an EIDBI agency.

(Laws of Minnesota 2025, First Special Session, [chapter 9](#), article 6, sections 1 and 14.)

## V. Foster care and youth transitions

### A. Relative and kin licensure modifications

Several sections governing child foster care licensure requirements were modified to reduce barriers to licensure for relatives of children in foster care.

#### 1. Expanded definitions of relative

The definition of “individual who is related” under Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 142B, was expanded to include a person who was considered to be an important friend of a child, parent, or custodian before a child’s placement in their home for foster care or adoption, similar to the definition of “relative” under Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 260C.

The definition of “relative” under Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 245C, was similarly created to align more closely with definitions of “relative” and “individual who is related” under Minnesota Statutes, Chapters 142B and 260C.

(Laws of Minnesota 2025, First Special Session, [chapter 3](#), article 10, sections 1 and 7.)

#### 2. Licensure exception for unrelated domestic partners

The requirement that individuals, including relatives, must be licensed to provide foster care to children was modified to exclude unmarried domestic partners of relatives from this requirement. Instead, only the person who is related to a child is required to be licensed. This does not impact background study requirements.

(Laws of Minnesota 2025, First Special Session, [chapter 3](#), article 10, section 2.)

### **3. Required training exemptions, delays, and reductions for relatives**

Effective Jan. 1, 2026, licensed relative foster care parents who are caring only for relative children will not be required to:

- Document that they have completed required training on sudden unexpected infant death, abusive head trauma, or child passenger restraint systems before caring for infants and children under age 5 or transporting children under age 8, before becoming licensed for child foster care. Instead, they will be required to document completion of these trainings within 30 days after becoming licensed.
- Complete at least one hour of training on fetal alcohol spectrum disorders if the relative child in their care does not have fetal alcohol spectrum disorder.
- Complete at least 12 hours of in-service training each year. Instead, they will be required to consult with their licensing agency to complete at least six hours of training in areas that are most applicable to caring for the relative children in their home.

(Laws of Minnesota 2025, First Special Session, [chapter 3](#), article 10, sections 3-6.)

### **4. Relative notice updates**

Effective Jan. 1, 2026, a responsible social services agency's relative notice requirements under Minnesota Statutes, section 260C.221, subdivision 2, will also include informing relatives of how to access respite care, strategies to leverage natural supports, ways to include other caregivers in a child's case plan, access to legal services, and a relative's choice between county or private agency licensing and services.

(Laws of Minnesota 2025, First Special Session, [chapter 3](#), article 10, section 24.)

## **B. Agency report and court review required 90 days before 18<sup>th</sup> birthday**

Two sections of Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 260C, were amended to add a court review accompanied by a written agency report during the 90-day period before a youth's 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. The court review applies to children placed in foster care via court order or voluntary placement agreement under Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 260D. The purpose of the court review and agency report is to ensure youth in foster care approaching age 18:

- Receive information, including the required notice of availability of foster care up to age 21; services; and resources they need to transition to adulthood.
- Are appropriately engaged by responsible social services agencies in transition planning and in developing plans for after their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.
- Understand their eligibility for extended foster care, including whether they are eligible to reenter extended foster care if they plan to leave foster care at age 18.

Responsible social services agencies are required to inform youth and parties to proceedings of agency report and court review requirements and of their right to request a hearing if they believe the agency did not make reasonable efforts. A court may also choose to hold a hearing at the court's discretion or issue an order without a hearing.

There were also two technical changes. The first moved a paragraph requiring annual court reviews for youth in extended foster care into its own subdivision within Minnesota Statutes, section 260C.202, and the second changed the term "green card" to "permanent resident card" in the list of documents agencies must assist youth ages 18 and older with obtaining before leaving foster care.

For more information, refer to [Bulletin 25-68-20, New legislation requires court review for foster youth before age 18.](#)

(Laws of Minnesota 2025, First Special Session, [chapter 3](#), article 10, sections 20-22, 29-30.)

## C. Out-of-home respite care services under Chapter 245D

The legislature added a new section, 245D.13, to Minnesota Statutes that directs children's access to out-of-home respite care services provided by a license holder with a home and community-based services license under Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 245D. Specifically, it requires such respite services to be provided in a licensed setting unless otherwise exempt from doing so. This exemption does not apply to children who are in foster care pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, Chapters 260C or 260D.

(Laws of Minnesota 2025, First Special Session, [chapter 9](#), article 2, section 8.)

## D. Fostering Independence Higher Education Grants

The legislature appropriated additional funding for the Office of Higher Education's (OHE) Fostering Independence Higher Education Grants program. This program provides funding to Minnesota students who were in foster care at any point after turning 13. For more information, visit [OHE's Fostering Independence Higher Education Grants webpage.](#)

(Laws of Minnesota 2025, First Special Session, [chapter 5](#), article 1, section 2, subdivision 26.)

# VI. Permanency and adoption

## A. Reestablishment of parental rights

Statute governing reestablishment of the legal parent-child relationship was modified to also apply to parents whose voluntary consent to their child's adoption was irrevocably accepted by the court, but their child's adoption either:

- Was not finalized by the prospective adoptive parents named in the consent to adoption, or

- Finalized, but the adoption dissolved, and the child reentered foster care and guardianship of the commissioner.

Petition and court order requirements were also amended to clarify that a child cannot be *currently* adopted for a parent to reestablish their legal relationship to the child. This clarification supports the reestablishment of a legal parent-child relationship following an adoption dissolution.

Note: These changes became effective statewide on July 1, 2025.

(Laws of Minnesota 2025, First Special Session, [chapter 3](#), article 10, sections 27-28.)

## **B. Public Private Permanency Collaboration (PPPC) expanded authority**

The authority of the commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Children, Youth, and Families to enter into contracts with licensed child-placing agencies and Minnesota Tribal social services agencies for adoption services under the Public Private Permanency Collaboration (PPPC) was expanded to include kinship services. PPPC-contracted agencies help county and Tribal social services agencies with finding permanent families for children in foster care who cannot be reunified with their parents or guardians, at no cost to a county or Tribe. This expansion means PPPC agencies will be able to support permanency efforts for children in foster care, whether a child's permanency plan is adoption, transfer of permanent legal and physical custody to a relative, or an equivalent permanency disposition in Tribal Code.

(Laws of Minnesota 2025, First Special Session, [chapter 3](#), article 11, section 1.)

## **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Advisory**

This information is available in accessible formats for people with disabilities by calling 651-539-7700 (voice) or by using your preferred relay service. For other information on disability rights and protections, contact the agency's ADA coordinator.