

No. 2005-73

## AN ACT

HB 1579

Providing for certain responsibilities of county and private agencies regarding resource families.

The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania hereby enacts as follows:

Section 1. Short title.

This act shall be known and may be cited as the Resource Family Care Act.

Section 2. Legislative intent.

The General Assembly recognizes and values the important service provided by resource families in caring for children and youth within the foster care system. It is the intent of the General Assembly to ensure that persons serving as resource families are treated equitably and with consideration and respect as a means of reinforcing productive and responsible interaction among all parties involved in protecting the safety and well-being of these children.

Section 3. Definitions.

The following words and phrases when used in this act shall have the meanings given to them in this section unless the context clearly indicates otherwise:

“County agency.” The county children and youth social service agency established pursuant to section 405 (relating to powers and duties of local authorities as to children) of the act of June 24, 1937 (P.L.2017, No.396), known as the County Institution District Law, or its successor, and supervised by the Department of Public Welfare under Article IX (relating to departmental powers and duties as to supervision) of the act of June 13, 1967 (P.L.31, No.21), known as the Public Welfare Code.

“Private agency.” A children and youth social service agency subject to the requirements of 55 Pa. Code Ch. 3680 (relating to administration and operation of a children and youth social service agency).

“Resource family.” A family which provides temporary foster or kinship care for children who need out-of-home placement and which may eventually provide permanency for those children, including as an adoptive family.

Section 4. Responsibilities of county and private agencies.

County and private agencies shall provide the following to resource families:

(1) Notification of scheduled meetings by the county or private agency concerning a child residing with a resource family in order to actively participate and have input into the service and permanency planning process regarding the child.

(2) Support services to assist in the care of the child, consistent with the child's approved permanency plan.

(3) Open, complete and timely responses from the county or private agency when contacted by the resource family regarding the role of the resource family and the care of the child.

(4) Information about the child's medical history, general behavior and relationship with his or her parents shall be provided to the resource family as soon as that information is obtained by the county or private agency. Within a reasonable amount of time the agency shall also provide information to the resource family concerning the educational history, life experiences and previous and prospective placement circumstances of the child.

(5) Consultation with the resource family in the development of the permanency plan.

(6) Consultation with the resource family in the decision to release the resource family's address to the child's parent and to be informed prior to such information being shared with the child's parent.

(7) Assistance with the coordination of services that may be deemed necessary due to resulting family loss and separation upon a child's departure from the resource family's home when such relocation is not the result of an immediate threat to the health and safety of the child caused by the resource family.

(8) Information on all county or private agency policies and procedures that relate to the role of a resource family.

(9) Any appropriate training deemed necessary to enhance the skills and performance of the resource family.

(10) Information on how to receive services and reach county or private agency personnel on a 24-hour-a-day, 7-day-a-week basis.

(11) Confidentiality regarding allegations of abuse involving a member of the resource family. The provision of confidentiality shall not interfere with the safety of the child.

(12) Opportunity to be heard regarding agency decisions or practices involving a child residing with the resource family. The agency shall not discharge, threaten or otherwise discriminate or retaliate against a resource family for an appropriate inquiry regarding the decisions or practices of an agency that affect a child residing with the resource family.

Section 5. Copy of responsibilities of county or private agencies to be provided.

All resource families shall be given a copy of the responsibilities enumerated in this act by the appropriate county or private agency upon approval as a resource family.

Section 6. Effective date.

This act shall take effect in 60 days.

APPROVED—The 22nd day of November, A.D. 2005.

EDWARD G. RENDELL