

AN ACT relating to kinship care.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Kentucky:

□ Section 1. KRS 605.120 is amended to read as follows:

- (1) The cabinet is authorized to expend available funds to provide for the board, lodging, and care of children who would otherwise be placed in foster care or who are placed by the cabinet in a foster home or boarding home, or may arrange for payments or contributions by any local governmental unit, or public or private agency or organization, willing to make payments or contributions for such purpose. The cabinet may accept any gift, devise, or bequest made to it for its purposes.
- (2) The cabinet shall establish a reimbursement system, within existing appropriation amounts, for foster parents that comes as close as possible to meeting the actual cost of caring for foster children. The cabinet shall consider providing additional reimbursement for foster parents who obtain additional training, and foster parents who have served for an extended period of time. In establishing a reimbursement system, the cabinet shall, to the extent possible within existing appropriation amounts, address the additional cost associated with providing care to children with exceptional needs.
- (3) The cabinet shall review reimbursement rates paid to foster parents on a biennial basis and shall issue a report in October of each odd-numbered year to the Legislative Research Commission comparing the rates paid by Kentucky to the figures presented in the Expenditures on Children by Families Annual Report prepared by the United States Department of Agriculture and the rates paid to foster parents by other states. To the extent that funding is available, reimbursement rates paid to foster parents shall be increased on an annual basis to reflect cost of living increases.
- (4) The cabinet is encouraged to develop pilot projects both within the state system and in collaboration with private child caring agencies to test alternative delivery

systems and nontraditional funding mechanisms.

- (5) ~~[To the extent funds are available,]~~The cabinet ~~*shall*~~~~[may]~~ establish, ***implement, and maintain*** a program for kinship care that provides a more permanent placement with a qualified relative for a child that would otherwise be placed in foster care due to abuse, neglect, or death of both parents.
- (6) The cabinet shall promulgate administrative regulations in accordance with KRS Chapter 13A to implement the provision of subsection (5) of this section. The administrative regulations shall include uniform conditions and requirements regarding:
- (a) Eligibility requirements for the kinship caregiver and the child;
 - (b) Financial assistance and payment rates; and
 - (c) Support services and case management services that ~~*shall*~~~~[may]~~ be provided to the kinship caregiver or the child.
- (7) Foster parents shall have the authority to make decisions regarding haircuts and hairstyles for foster children who are in their care for thirty (30) days or more.