

JLBC Fiscal Note

BILL # SB 1172

TITLE: DCS; intake hotline; multiple reports

SPONSOR: Werner

PREPARED BY: Maggie Rocker

STATUS: Senate Engrossed

Description

The bill would require the Department of Child Safety (DCS), upon receiving 4 or more reports of abuse or neglect concerning a single caregiver within 12 months, to assign the investigation to a specialist with 2 or more years of experience or a specialist with advanced forensic training.

Estimated Impact

The bill would likely require the agency to shift workload from caseworkers with less experience to caseworkers with more experience. However, we lack data and agency input concerning how many caseworkers would qualify for these investigations and how often caregivers are re-reported within a 12-month period. DCS has not yet responded to our request for their perspective.

Analysis

Our estimate assumes the following:

- 1) DCS operates a 24/7 centralized intake hotline accepting communications regarding suspected child abuse and neglect. Intake specialists determine if the intake meets the criteria for a report, which is then transmitted to the appropriate unit for investigation – either a local DCS office or the Office of Child Welfare Investigations (OCWI). The OCWI is responsible for investigating reports containing criminal conduct allegations of child abuse. In FY 2025, DCS prepared a report for 43,800 communications concerning 30,484 unduplicated children. Of the number of children reported, 23.9% were re-reported at least once within 12 months. We do not have more specific data concerning the number of re-reports by caregiver or child in order to assess the precise magnitude of the workload that would need to be reallocated.
- 2) In FY 2025, DCS filled an annual average of 953 case-carrying child safety specialists and 75 OCWI investigative specialists, with an annual turnover rate of 38%. We do not have data concerning the tenure of individual specialists to estimate how many specialists meet the 2-year requirement and could assume investigations as specified by the bill.

3/4/2026