

H.201

An act relating to length of stay at designated shelters

It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

Sec. 1. 33 V.S.A. § 5303 is amended to read:

§ 5303. PROCEDURE FOR RUNAWAY CHILDREN

(a) If an officer takes a child into custody pursuant to subdivision 5301(3) of this title, the officer shall deliver the child to:

(1) the child's custodial parent, foster parent, guardian, custodian, or noncustodial parent lawfully exercising parent-child contact; or

(2) a shelter designated by the Department pursuant to section 5304 of this title as qualified to assist children who have run away for the purpose of reuniting them with their parents, guardian, or legal custodian.

(b) Upon delivery of a child to a shelter, the shelter program director or his or her designee, shall notify the child's parents, guardian, or custodian that the child has been taken into custody and make reasonable efforts to mediate the differences between the parties.

(c) A child may remain at a designated shelter for a period not to exceed ~~seven~~ 21 days.

(d) Upon expiration of the ~~seven-day~~ 21-day period or sooner at the request of the child or the custodial parent:

(1) the child shall be released to his or her custodial parent, foster parent, guardian, custodian, or noncustodial parent lawfully exercising parent-child contact; or

(2) an officer shall seek an emergency care order pursuant to section 5302 of this title.

(e) Unless otherwise ordered by the ~~Court~~ court, the custody status of the child shall remain the same during the period of time the child is at the shelter.

Sec. 2. 33 V.S.A. § 5304 is amended to read:

§ 5304. DESIGNATED SHELTERS FOR RUNAWAY CHILDREN

The Commissioner shall designate shelters throughout the State where a child may be housed for a period not to exceed 21 days if he or she is:

(1) taken into custody pursuant to subdivision 5301(3) of this title ~~may be housed for a period not to exceed seven days; or~~

(2) referred by other means described in the policies of the Department for Children and Families.

Sec. 3. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on July 1, 2017.