
This act summary is provided for the convenience of the public and members of the General Assembly. It is intended to provide a general summary of the act and may not be exhaustive. It has been prepared by the staff of the Office of Legislative Counsel without input from members of the General Assembly. It is not intended to aid in the interpretation of legislation or to serve as a source of legislative intent.

Act No. 129 (H.265). Human services; child protection

An act relating to the Office of the Child, Youth, and Family Advocate

This act establishes the Office of the Child, Youth, and Family Advocate (Office), which shall act independently of any State agency in the performance of its duties. The Office is charged with:

- advocating for the welfare of children and youths receiving services from the Department for Children and Families (Department) directly, or through funds provided by the Department, and those involved in the child protection and juvenile justice systems; and
- promoting reforms necessary to better serve Vermont's children, youths, and families in a manner that addresses racial and social equity.

This act specifies that the Office is directed by the Child, Youth, and Family Advocate (Advocate). Qualified candidates to serve as Advocate are recommended by the Oversight Commission on Children, Youths, and Families to the Governor, who in turn is required to appoint an Advocate, subject to Senate confirmation, to a four-year term.

This act provides the Advocate with an Advisory Council composed of stakeholders who have been impacted by child welfare services provided by the Department for the purpose of providing advice and guidance to the Office. It also specifies the information to which the Advocate has access and the Office's responsibility to maintain confidentiality over certain records and prohibits employees of the Office from having any conflicts of interest that would interfere with their duties.

Multiple effective dates, beginning on July 1, 2022