

1       Sec. X. CHILD AND PARENT LEGAL REPRESENTATION; TASK  
2                   FORCE; REPORT

3           (a) Creation. There is created the Child and Parent Legal Representation  
4           Task Force to study the need and potential viability of an improved legal  
5           representation system for children and families who are involved in judicial  
6           or administrative proceedings concerning Children in Need of Care or  
7           Supervision (CHINS), relief from abuse petitions, or substantiations of abuse  
8           or neglect.

9           (b) Membership. The Task Force shall be composed of the following  
10          members:

11           (1) the Chief Justice of the Vermont Supreme Court or designee;

12           (2) the Court Administrator or designee;

13           (3) the Commissioner of the Department for Children and Families or  
14          designee;

15           (4) the Defender General or designee;

16           (5) the Child, Youth, and Family Advocate or designee;

17           (6) the Executive Director of Voices for Vermont's Children or  
18          designee; and

19           (7) the Executive Director of the Vermont Parent Representation  
20          Center, Inc.

1        (c) Powers and duties. The Task Force shall assess and determine whether  
2        reform of Vermont’s legal representation for children and families is necessary  
3        by exploring the following topics:

4                (1) standards recommended by the American Bar Association, U.S.  
5        Children’s Bureau, and the *Study of CHINS Case Processing in Vermont*  
6        authored by the National Center for State Courts and published in May of  
7        2021;

8                (2) compliance with funding and reporting requirements in order for  
9        Vermont to leverage funding under Title IV-E of the Social Security Act;

10               (3) identifying the processes and amounts of Title IV-E funds and other  
11        funding sources to support any reformed system;

12               (4) using an interdisciplinary model of representation, including pay  
13        scales, performance measures, supervision and evaluation processes, and  
14        recommended caseloads for attorneys, social workers, and other child and  
15        family representatives; and

16               (5) other topics relevant to creating reformed child and parent  
17        representations system.

18        (d) Assistance. The Task Force shall have administrative, technical, and  
19        legal assistance of the Court Administrator’s Office.

20        (e) Report. On or before December 15, 2025, the Task Force shall submit a  
21        report that proposes any necessary reforms to the legal representation system

1 for children and families who are involved in CHINS proceedings and  
2 proposed legislation to implement such reforms to the Senate Committees on  
3 Judiciary and on Health and Welfare and the House Committees on Judiciary  
4 and on Human Services.

5 (f) Meetings.

6 (1) The Chief Justice of the Supreme Court or designee shall call the  
7 first meeting of the Task Force to occur on or before August 1, 2025.

8 (2) A majority of the membership shall constitute a quorum.

9 (3) The Task Force shall meet not more than six times.

10 (4) The Task Force shall cease to exist on February 15, 2026.