

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 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 a reformed child and parent
17 representation 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, relief from
2 abuse petitions, or substantiations of abuse or neglect, along with proposed
3 legislation to implement such reforms to the Senate Committees on Judiciary
4 and on Health and Welfare and the House Committees on Judiciary and on
5 Human Services.

6 (f) Meetings.

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

9 (2) The Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of designee shall be the
10 chair.

11 (3) A majority of the membership shall constitute a quorum.

12 (4) The Task Force shall cease to exist on May 15, 2026.