

WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

2025 REGULAR SESSION

Introduced

House Bill 2880

By Delegates Burkhammer, Kimble, Mazzocchi,

Pinson, and Petitto

Introduced February 24, 2025; referred to the

Committee on Health and Human Resources

1 A BILL to amend and reenact §49-1-201 and §49-4-405 of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as
2 amended, relating to defining parent resource navigators.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

ARTICLE 1. GENERAL PROVISIONS AND DEFINITIONS.

§49-1-201. Definitions related, but not limited, to child abuse and neglect.

1 When used in this chapter, terms defined in this section have the meanings ascribed to
2 them that relate to, but are not limited to, child abuse and neglect, except in those instances where
3 a different meaning is provided or the context in which the word is used clearly indicates that a
4 different meaning is intended.

5 "Abandonment" means any conduct that demonstrates the settled purpose to forego the
6 duties and parental responsibilities to the child;

7 "Abused child" means:

8 (1) A child whose health or welfare is being harmed or threatened by:

9 (A) A parent, guardian, or custodian who knowingly or intentionally inflicts, attempts to
10 inflict, or knowingly allows another person to inflict, physical injury or mental or emotional injury,
11 upon the child or another child in the home. Physical injury may include an injury to the child as a
12 result of excessive corporal punishment;

13 (B) Sexual abuse or sexual exploitation;

14 (C) The sale or attempted sale of a child by a parent, guardian, or custodian in violation of
15 §61-2-14h of this code;

16 (D) Domestic violence as defined in §48-27-202 of this code; or

17 (E) Human trafficking or attempted human trafficking, in violation of §61-14-2 of this code.

18 (2) A child conceived as a result of sexual assault, as that term is defined in this section, or
19 as a result of the violation of a criminal law of another jurisdiction which has the same essential
20 elements: *Provided*, That no victim of sexual assault may be determined to be an abusive parent,
21 as that term is defined in this section, based upon being a victim of sexual assault.

"Abusing parent" means a parent, guardian, or other custodian, regardless of his or her age, whose conduct has been adjudicated by the court to constitute child abuse or neglect as alleged in the petition charging child abuse or neglect.

"Battered parent" for the purposes of §49-4-601 *et seq.* of this code means a respondent parent, guardian, or other custodian who has been adjudicated by the court to have not condoned the abuse or neglect and has not been able to stop the abuse or neglect of the child or children due to being the victim of domestic violence as defined by §48-27-202 of this code, which was perpetrated by the same person or persons determined to have abused or neglected the child or children.

"Child abuse and neglect" or "child abuse or neglect" means any act or omission that creates an abused child or a neglected child as those terms are defined in this section.

"Child abuse and neglect services" means social services which are directed toward:

(A) Protecting and promoting the welfare of children who are abused or neglected;

(B) Identifying, preventing, and remedying conditions which cause child abuse and neglect;

(C) Preventing the unnecessary removal of children from their families by identifying family problems and assisting families in resolving problems which could lead to a removal of children and a breakup of the family;

(D) In cases where children have been removed from their families, providing time-limited reunification services to the children and the families so as to reunify those children with their families, or some portion of the families;

(E) Placing children in suitable adoptive homes when reunifying the children with their families, or some portion of the families, is not possible or appropriate; and

(F) Assuring the adequate care of children or juveniles who have been placed in the custody of the department or third parties.

"Condition requiring emergency medical treatment" means a condition which, if left

untreated for a period of a few hours, may result in permanent physical damage; that condition includes, but is not limited to, profuse or arterial bleeding, dislocation or fracture, unconsciousness, and evidence of ingestion of significant amounts of a poisonous substance.

"Imminent danger to the physical well-being of the child" means an emergency situation in which the welfare or the life of the child is threatened. These conditions may include an emergency situation when there is reasonable cause to believe that any child in the home is or has been sexually abused or sexually exploited, or reasonable cause to believe that the following conditions threaten the health, life, or safety of any child in the home:

(A) Nonaccidental trauma inflicted by a parent, guardian, custodian, sibling, babysitter or other caretaker;

(B) A combination of physical and other signs indicating a pattern of abuse which may be medically diagnosed as battered child syndrome;

(C) Nutritional deprivation;

(D) Abandonment by the parent, guardian, or custodian;

(E) Inadequate treatment of serious illness or disease;

(F) Substantial emotional injury inflicted by a parent, guardian, or custodian;

(G) Sale or attempted sale of the child by the parent, guardian, or custodian;

(H) The parent, guardian, or custodian's abuse of alcohol or drugs or other controlled substance as defined in §60A-1-101 of this code, has impaired his or her parenting skills to a degree as to pose an imminent risk to a child's health or safety; or

(I) Any other condition that threatens the health, life or safety of any child in the home.

"Neglected child" means a child:

(A) Whose physical or mental health is harmed or threatened by a present refusal, failure or inability of the child's parent, guardian, or custodian to supply the child with necessary food, clothing, shelter, supervision, medical care, or education, when that refusal, failure, or inability is not due primarily to a lack of financial means on the part of the parent, guardian, or custodian;

(B) Who is presently without necessary food, clothing, shelter, medical care, education, or supervision because of the disappearance or absence of the child's parent or custodian; or

(C) "Neglected child" does not mean a child whose education is conducted within the provisions of §18-8-1 *et seq.* of this code.

"Parent Resource Navigator" means an individual established through Court Improvement Program (CIP) or Public Defender Services (PDS) model who is assisting a parent or parents through requirements to be unified or reunified with their child or children.

"Petitioner or copetitioner" means the department or any reputable person who files a child abuse or neglect petition pursuant to §49-4-601 *et seq.* of this code.

"Permanency plan" means the part of the case plan which is designed to achieve a permanent home for the child in the least restrictive setting available.

"Respondent" means all parents, guardians, and custodians identified in the child abuse and neglect petition who are not petitioners or copetitioners.

"Sexual abuse" means:

(A) Sexual intercourse, sexual intrusion, sexual contact, or conduct proscribed by §61-8c-3 of this code, which a parent, guardian, or custodian engages in, attempts to engage in, or knowingly procures another person to engage in, with a child notwithstanding the fact that for a child who is less than 16 years of age, the child may have willingly participated in that conduct or the child may have suffered no apparent physical, mental or emotional injury as a result of that conduct or, for a child 16 years of age or older, the child may have consented to that conduct or the child may have suffered no apparent physical injury or mental or emotional injury as a result of that conduct;

(B) Any conduct where a parent, guardian, or custodian displays his or her sex organs to a child, or procures another person to display his or her sex organs to a child, for the purpose of gratifying the sexual desire of the parent, guardian, or custodian, of the person making that display, or of the child, or for the purpose of affronting or alarming the child; or

(C) Any of the offenses proscribed in §61-8b-7, §61-8b-8, or §61-8b-9 of this code.

"Sexual assault" means any of the offenses proscribed in §61-8b-3, §61-8b-4, or §61-8b-5 of this code.

"Sexual contact" means sexual contact as that term is defined in §61-8b-1 of this code.

"Sexual exploitation" means an act where:

(A) A parent, custodian, or guardian, whether for financial gain or not, persuades, induces, entices or coerces a child to engage in sexually explicit conduct as that term is defined in §61-8c-1 of this code;

(B) A parent, guardian, or custodian persuades, induces, entices or coerces a child to display his or her sex organs for the sexual gratification of the parent, guardian, custodian or a third person, or to display his or her sex organs under circumstances in which the parent, guardian, or custodian knows that the display is likely to be observed by others who would be affronted or alarmed; or

(C) A parent, guardian, or custodian knowingly maintains or makes available a child for the purpose of engaging the child in commercial sexual activity in violation of §61-14-5 of this code.

"Sexual intercourse" means sexual intercourse as that term is defined in §61-8b-1 of this code.

"Sexual intrusion" means sexual intrusion as that term is defined in §61-8b-1 of this code.

"Serious physical abuse" means bodily injury which creates a substantial risk of death, causes serious or prolonged disfigurement, prolonged impairment of health, or prolonged loss or impairment of the function of any bodily organ.

ARTICLE 4. COURT ACTIONS.

§49-4-405. Multidisciplinary treatment planning process involving child abuse and neglect; team membership; duties; reports; admissions.

(a) Within 30 days of the initiation of a judicial proceeding pursuant to part six, of this article, the department shall convene a multidisciplinary treatment team to assess, plan and

3 implement a comprehensive, individualized service plan for children who are victims of abuse or
4 neglect and their families. The multidisciplinary team shall obtain and utilize any assessments for
5 the children or the adult respondents that it deems necessary to assist in the development of that
6 plan.

7 (b) In a case initiated pursuant to part six of this article, the treatment team consists of:

8 (1) The child or family's case manager in the department;

9 (2) The adult respondent or respondents;

10 (3) The child's parent or parents, guardians, any copetitioners, custodial relatives of the
11 child, foster or preadoptive parents;

12 (4) Any attorney representing an adult respondent or other member of the treatment team;

13 (5) The child's counsel or the guardian ad litem;

14 (6) The prosecuting attorney or his or her designee;

15 (7) A member of a child advocacy center when the child has been processed through the
16 child advocacy center program or programs or it is otherwise appropriate that a member of the
17 child advocacy center participate;

18 (8) Any court-appointed special advocate assigned to a case;

19 (9) Any other person entitled to notice and the right to be heard;

20 (10) An appropriate school official;

21 (11) A parent resource navigator;

22 ~~(11)~~ (12) The managed care case coordinator; and

23 ~~(12)~~ (13) Any other person or agency representative who may assist in providing
24 recommendations for the particular needs of the child and family, including domestic violence
25 service providers.

26 The child may participate in multidisciplinary treatment team meetings if the child's
27 participation is deemed appropriate by the multidisciplinary treatment team. Unless otherwise
28 ordered by the court, a party whose parental rights have been terminated and his or her attorney

may not be given notice of a multidisciplinary treatment team meeting and does not have the right to participate in any treatment team meeting.

(c) Prior to disposition in each case which a treatment planning team has been convened, the team shall advise the court as to the types of services the team has determined are needed and the type of placement, if any, which will best serve the needs of the child. If the team determines that an out-of-home placement will best serve the needs of the child, the team shall first consider placement with appropriate relatives then with foster care homes, facilities or programs located within the state. The team may only recommend placement in an out-of-state facility if it concludes, after considering the best interests and overall needs of the child, that there are no available and suitable in-state facilities which can satisfactorily meet the specific needs of the child.

(d) The multidisciplinary treatment team shall submit written reports to the court as required by the rules governing this type of proceeding or by the court, and shall meet as often as deemed necessary but at least every three months until the case is dismissed from the docket of the court. The multidisciplinary treatment team shall be available for status conferences and hearings as required by the court.

(e) If a respondent or copetitioner admits the underlying allegations of child abuse or neglect, or both abuse and neglect, in the multidisciplinary treatment planning process, his or her statements may not be used in any subsequent criminal proceeding against him or her, except for perjury or false swearing.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to define parent resource navigators in the code.

Strike-throughs indicate language that would be stricken from a heading or the present law and underscoring indicates new language that would be added.