



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
BRUCE RAUNER

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Gov. Rauner signs legislation aimed at keeping at-risk families together

SPRINGFIELD — Gov. Bruce Rauner signed legislation today aimed at stabilizing families and providing additional services to those whose children are at risk of entering the child welfare system.

The joint-agency services are available to families with children under the age of 5 who already have an open intact family services case with the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS). Families will be offered child care assistance under the Illinois Department of Human Service's child care assistance program for six months after the child's intact family services case is closed.

"Children thrive when their families are healthy," Rauner said. "We want to make sure families stay together. Child care services are critical when it comes to helping parents rebuild, and this additional time gives them an opportunity to transition into new routines after their involvement with DCFS ends."

Intact Family Services through DCFS provide at-risk families with job training, housing assistance, counseling, and substance use services that help them avoid more intensive and traumatic interventions.

"This is a unique collaboration with IDHS focused on the state's youngest children," said DCFS Acting Director B.J. Walker. "This allows social service workers to put an extra set of eyes on a family and help them identify any concerns they may need to address."

“For some children, their child care setting may be the most reliable and stable part of their lives,” said IDHS Secretary James Dimas. “Allowing these children to maintain some stability during a very critical period of their development will help them for the rest of their lives.”

“Some families involved with the child welfare system have great difficulty accessing safe, affordable child care,” said Paula Corrigan-Halpern, vice president, Ahlquist Center for Policy, Practice and Innovation at Children’s Home and Aid. “Child care can provide the nurturing environment and learning opportunities that support a child’s healthy development and mitigate the impact of early exposure to trauma. Children’s Home & Aid has seen the positive difference high-quality child care makes in the lives of children and families. As a result of HB 4885, parents will be better able to access the services they need to strengthen their families and reduce the risk of abuse and neglect.”

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