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# Senate Aging & Youth Committee

Senator Bob Mensch

*Chairman*

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## **Analysis House Bill 1076, P.N. 1915**

**Prime Sponsor: Representative Dan Moul**

### **Overview**

Requires county children and youth agencies to offer family conferencing to families who are in service.

### **Summary**

Amends the Public Welfare code to require county children and youth social service agencies to offer family conferencing to all children and families who are clients of the county agency.

Family conferencing must be offered at key decision points that impact the development or revision of service plans for the child and the family and until the child and the family's involvement with the county agency is terminated.

Family conferencing does not have to be offered if it is not in the best interest of the child, it is a threat to the safety of the child or another family member, or adoption proceedings for the child have commenced.

County agencies must consult with the child and the child's parents or legal guardian to determine who will be invited to attend a family conference, promoting both maternal and paternal involvement in the conference. Participation by a child and siblings must be age and developmentally appropriate. Relevant service providers, guardian ad litem and parental legal representation must be consulted in preparation for the family conferencing. Services available to the family to prepare them to safely participate in the family conference should be identified by the county agency and given to the family.

The family is responsible for developing a plan to address the concerns of safety, permanency and well-being within the family regarding the child. This will become part of the county agency's service plan.

Family conferencing will include discussion by the family about available resources within the family, community and county agency. The family must

determine what resources to utilize to address the concerns of safety, permanency and well-being identified by the county agency or the court.

Plans must be approved by the county agency or submitted for approval to the court if the child is under the jurisdiction of the court. If a family is unable to develop an approved plan through the family conference, the county agency will determine other means to engage the family and the child, if appropriate, in developing a plan that addresses the concerns of safety, permanency and well-being identified by the county agency or the court.

The department must require county agencies to gradually implement family conferencing so that within three years family conferencing can be offered in situations where the child is placed outside of the home and offered within five years to all children and families who are clients of the county agency.

The department must promulgate regulations within one year of the act's effective date.

**Effective Date**

60 days.