



Agency Legislative Proposal

2026 Session

General Information

Agency	Dept. of Children and Families
Proposal Name	Legislative Reporting Update
Legislative Liaison	Mike Carone
Division Requesting Proposal	Government Relations and Policy
Drafter	Vincent Russo

Overview

Brief Summary of Proposal

This proposal would combine eight different legislatively mandated reports the Department is required to submit annually. This proposal also eliminates three reports for the department (and other agencies) entirely. One through combining it into another report and another two that are now unnecessary due to program funding lapses and the transfer of juvenile justice programs.

What problem is this proposal looking to solve?

Currently, the Department has several different due dates throughout the year for these various reports. This causes confusion amongst staff and creates unnecessary difficulty in the Department meeting these reporting requirements and leads to negative audit findings.

How does the proposal solve the problem?

This proposal would create one due date by establishing an annual legislative report. It would eliminate confusion of when certain reports are due from certain divisions of the Department. The October 15 due date gives the Department enough time to review the previous fiscal years activity and meet the report deadline.

Section by section summary:

Section #(s)	Section Summary
1	A new section that creates an annual report that merges various existing statutory reporting requirements.
2	Section 17a-6e is repealed
3	Section 17a-10a(f) is repealed
4	Section 17a-32a is repealed
5	Section 17a-63a is repealed
6	Section 17a-100c is repealed
7	Section 17a-101g (g)(11) is repealed
8	Section 17a-114g is repealed
9	Section 10-19m(c) is repealed
10	Sec. 17a-22ii(d) is repealed.
11	Section 17a-22m is amended to include estimated cost savings, if any, resulting from implementation of the Behavioral Health Partnership from Section 17a-22n.
12	Section 17a-22n is repealed and its reporting requirements are added/merged into section 17a-22m.
13	Section 4-68y is repealed.
Statutory Reference (if any):	17a-6e, 17a-10a(f), 17a-32a, 17a-63a, 17a-100c, 17a-101g (g)(11), 17a-114g, 10-19m(c), 17a-22ii(d), 17a-22m, 17a-22n and 4-68y.

Background

☒ New Proposal

☐ Resubmission

If resubmission, please provide details below. Please also note any changes made since the last submission:

Bill #(s)	Reason bill(s) did not move forward
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Have there been any changes in federal laws or regulations that make this legislation necessary?

No

Have there been any changes in state laws or regulations that make this legislation necessary?

No

Has this proposal or a similar proposal been implemented in other states?

No

Have certain constituencies called for this proposal?

No

Interagency Impact

☐ Check here if this proposal does NOT impact other agencies

Agency	Dept. of Mental Health and Addiction Services
Contact	Chandra Persaud
Date Contacted	9/15/2025
Status	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Approved <input type="checkbox"/> Unresolved
Open Issues	
Agency	Dept. of Emergency Services and Public Protection
Contact	Ashley Zane
Date Contacted	9/22/2025
Status	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Approved <input type="checkbox"/> Unresolved
Open Issues	
Agency	Dept. of Social Services
Contact	David Seifel
Date Contacted	9/15/2025
Status	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Approved <input type="checkbox"/> Unresolved
Open Issues	

Fiscal Impact

☒ No Fiscal Impact

☐ Budget Option Submitted

Include the section number(s) which have a fiscal impact and the anticipated impact:

State

No

Municipal

No

Federal

No

Other Information

If there is any additional information we should know, please detail below:

After an in-depth review of all the legislative reports the agency has been required to submit to the legislature, it was identified that eight reports could be merged into one, two could be combined into one and one could be eliminated entirely.

Legislative Language

Insert fully drafted bill below. Please use standard legislative drafting considerations, as published by LCO [here](#).

Section 1. (NEW) (Effective upon passage) No later than October 15, 2027, and annually thereafter, the Department of Children and Families shall file, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a, a report on the business of the department during the previous fiscal year ending on June thirtieth to the joint standing committees of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to children and appropriations and the budgets of state agencies. Such report shall include, but is not limited to:

(a) Data illustrating utilization of the department's services by race and ethnicity, an assessment of trends in such utilization and recommendations for results-based accountability measures to ensure parity in access to such services.

(b) Data sufficient to demonstrate compliance with subsections (a), (c) and (e) of section 17a-10a. Such data shall include (1) the total annual number of children in out-of-home placements who have siblings; (2) the total number of child cases with documented sibling visitation and; (3) the number of individual siblings involved in each case.

(c) Information regarding facilities operated by the department including (1) aggregate profiles of the residents; (2) a description of and update on major initiatives; (3) key outcome indicators and results; (4) costs associated with operating the facility; and (5) a description of educational, vocational and literacy programs, and behavioral, treatment and other services available to the residents and their outcomes.

(d) The number of written reports regarding actual or suspected instances of animal neglect or cruelty received from employees of the department pursuant to section 17a-100a and from animal control officers pursuant to section 22-329b.

(e) Information regarding the department's family assessment response track including: (1) The number of accepted reports of child abuse or neglect, and the percentage of reports assigned to the family assessment response track; (2) the disposition of families assigned a family assessment response ; (3) for cases assigned to the family assessment response track, a breakdown by reporter type; (4) the number and percentage of family assessment response cases that changed track to investigations; (5) an analysis of the department's

prior or subsequent involvement with a family that has been assigned to family assessment response, if applicable; (6) an analysis of the department's prior or subsequent involvement with a family that has been assigned to a community partner agency; (7) a description of services that are commonly provided to families referred to the community support for families program; (8) a description of the department's staff development and training practices relating to intake; (9) the number and percentage of referred families who were ultimately enrolled in the community support for families program; (10) the number and percentage of families receiving a family assessment response broken down by race and ethnicity; (11) the reason for discharge from the community support for families program, as identified in subdivision (12) of this subsection, broken down by race and ethnicity; (13) a comparison of the needs identified and the needs addressed for families referred to the community support for families program; and (14) an analysis of the efficacy of the department's risk and safety assessment practices, including information concerning the methodology used to determine the reliability of such practices, the utilization of evidence-based practices and tools, and the effectiveness of such assessment practices for identifying children at risk for abuse or neglect.

(f) Information regarding private providers including (1) the number of service types with measurable outcomes for each type of service provided by a private provider pursuant to such provider's contract with the department; (2) the incorporation of such outcomes into contracts; and (3) the achievement of such outcomes and other quality indicators in annual evaluations of each such provider; and (4) the application of outcome information into quality improvement.

(g) (1) The department's methods of ensuring that it complies with statutory and regulatory foster care licensing requirements; (2) the department's methods of assessing the needs of children and youths in foster care and providing support for foster parents to enable such parents to meet the needs of such children and youths; (3) the safeguards employed by the department when it seeks to license a relative caregiver with a history of child abuse or neglect or psychiatric illness or a criminal record; (4) the department's process for reversing a substantiated finding of child abuse or neglect or a child abuse and neglect registry finding with respect to a prospective relative caregiver; (5) the number of reports of child abuse or neglect made within the previous twelve months regarding children and youths residing in foster homes licensed by such department and the number of such

reports that were substantiated; (6) the number of foster home licenses revoked and foster home license applications denied by the department in the previous twelve months; (7) the results of the department's random audits of its licensing practices; and (8) information regarding the number and type of safety concerns identified by the department with respect to licensed foster home placements through the department's assessment of regulatory compliance system and any corresponding corrective actions taken.

(h) Information regarding the diversion of children under the age of eighteen years from the juvenile justice system and the court system including, but not be limited to, (1) the number of times any child is so diverted; (2) the number of children diverted; (3) the type of service provided to any such child; (4) by whom such child was diverted; (5) the ages of the children diverted and; (6) such other information and statistics as the General Assembly or the department may request from time to time. Any such report shall contain no identifying information about any particular child.

Section 2. Section 17a-6e of the general statutes is repealed (Effective Upon Passage):

[Annual report re utilization of Department of Children and Families' services by race and ethnicity. Not later than February 15, 2019, and annually thereafter, the Commissioner of Children and Families shall submit a report, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a, to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to children. Such report shall include data illustrating utilization of the Department of Children and Families' services by race and ethnicity, an assessment of trends in such utilization and recommendations for results-based accountability measures to ensure parity in access to such services.]

Section 3. Subsection (f) of Section 17a-10a of the general statutes is repealed (Effective Upon Passage):

[(f) On or before October first of each year, the commissioner shall report, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a, to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to children, data sufficient to demonstrate compliance with subsections (a), (c) and (e) of this section. Such data shall include the total annual number of children in out-of-home placements who have siblings, the total number of child cases with documented sibling visitation and the number of individual siblings involved in each case.]

Section 4. Section 17a-32a of the general statutes is repealed (Effective Upon Passage):

[(a) The facilities that come under the jurisdiction of the Department of Children and Families, as enumerated in section 17a-32, shall submit an annual report on or before November first to the State Advisory Council on Children and Families and to their respective advisory groups, established pursuant to subsection (b) of section 17a-6. The report shall include, but not be limited to: (1) Aggregate profiles of the residents; (2) a description of and update on major initiatives; (3) key outcome indicators and results; (4) costs associated with operating the facility; and (5) a description of educational, vocational and literacy programs, and behavioral, treatment and other services available to the residents and their outcomes. Each report submitted pursuant to this subsection shall be posted on the department's web site.

(b) Such advisory groups shall respond to their facility's annual report, submitted pursuant to subsection (a) of this section, and provide any recommendations for improvement or enhancement that they deem necessary.

(c) The Department of Children and Families shall serve as administrative staff of such advisory groups.]

Section 5. Section 17a-63a of the general statutes is repealed (Effective Upon Passage):

[Private service provider. Contract with Department of Children and Families. Measurable outcomes. Annual report to General Assembly. The Commissioner of Children and Families shall (1) determine measurable outcomes for each type of service provided by a private provider pursuant to such provider's contract with the Department of Children and Families; (2) incorporate such outcomes into the department's contract with each such provider; and (3) include achievement of such outcomes and other quality indicators in annual evaluations of each such provider. The department shall, annually, submit a report, in accordance with section 11-4a, to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to children on the department's progress in implementing such steps, including (A) the number of service types with outcomes, (B) the types of outcomes, (C) the incorporation of such outcomes into contracts, and (D) the application of outcome information into quality improvement.]

Section 6. Section 17a-100c of the general statutes is repealed (Effective Upon Passage):

[Annual report re actual or suspected instances of animal neglect or cruelty. Not later than February 15, 2018, and annually thereafter, the Commissioners of Children and Families and Agriculture shall, in accordance with section 11-4a, report to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to children on the number of written reports regarding actual or suspected instances of animal neglect or cruelty received from employees of the Department of Children and Families pursuant to section 17a-100a and from animal control officers pursuant to section 22-329b.]

Section 7. Subdivision (11) of Subsection (g) of Section 17a-101g of the general statutes is repealed (Effective Upon Passage):

[(11) Not later than July 1, 2016, and annually thereafter, the department shall submit a report, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a, to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to children for inclusion in the annual report card prepared pursuant to section 2-53m on the status of family assessment response. Such report shall include data from the previous calendar year, including, but not limited to: (A) The number of accepted reports of child abuse or neglect, and the percentage of reports assigned to the family assessment response track; (B) the disposition of families assigned a family assessment response; (C) for cases assigned to the family assessment response track, a breakdown by reporter type; (D) the number and percentage of family assessment response cases that changed track to investigations; (E) an analysis of the department's prior or subsequent involvement with a family that has been assigned to family assessment response, if applicable; (F) an analysis of the department's prior or subsequent involvement with a family that has been assigned to a community partner agency; (G) a description of services that are commonly provided to families referred to the community support for families program; (H) a description of the department's staff development and training practices relating to intake; (I) the number and percentage of referred families who were ultimately enrolled in the community support for families program; (J) the number and percentage of families receiving a family assessment response broken down by race and ethnicity; (K) the reason for discharge from the community support for families program, as identified in subdivision (7) of this subsection, broken down by race and ethnicity; (L) a comparison of the needs identified and the needs addressed for families referred to the community support for families program; and (M) an analysis of the efficacy of the department's risk and safety

assessment practices, including information concerning the methodology used to determine the reliability of such practices, the utilization of evidence-based practices and tools, and the effectiveness of such assessment practices for identifying children at risk for abuse or neglect.]

Section 8. Section 17a-114g of the general statutes is repealed (Effective Upon Passage):

[Annual report re foster care licensing practices. Not later than January 1, 2018, and annually thereafter, the Commissioner of Children and Families shall report, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a, to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to children, regarding Department of Children and Families foster care licensing practices. Such report shall include, but need not be limited to, (1) such department's methods of ensuring that it complies with statutory and regulatory foster care licensing requirements; (2) such department's methods of assessing the needs of children and youths in foster care and providing support for foster parents to enable such parents to meet the needs of such children and youths; (3) the safeguards employed by such department when it seeks to license a relative caregiver with a history of child abuse or neglect or psychiatric illness or a criminal record; (4) such department's process for reversing a substantiated finding of child abuse or neglect or a child abuse and neglect registry finding with respect to a prospective relative caregiver; (5) the number of reports of child abuse or neglect made within the previous twelve months regarding children and youths residing in foster homes licensed by such department and the number of such reports that were substantiated; (6) the number of foster home licenses revoked and foster home license applications denied by such department in the previous twelve months; (7) the results of such department's random audits of its licensing practices; and (8) information regarding the number and type of safety concerns identified by such department with respect to licensed foster home placements through such department's assessment of regulatory compliance system and any corresponding corrective actions taken.]

Section 9. Subsection (c) of Section 10-19m of the general statutes is repealed (Effective Upon Passage):

[(c) The Commissioner of Children and Families shall adopt regulations, in accordance with the provisions of chapter 54, establishing minimum standards for such youth service

bureaus and the criteria for qualifying for state cost-sharing grants, including, but not limited to, allowable sources of funds covering the local share of the costs of operating such bureaus, acceptable in-kind contributions and application procedures. The commissioner shall, on December 1, 2011, and biennially thereafter, report to the General Assembly on the referral or diversion of children under the age of eighteen years from the juvenile justice system and the court system. Such report shall include, but not be limited to, the number of times any child is so diverted, the number of children diverted, the type of service provided to any such child, by whom such child was diverted, the ages of the children diverted and such other information and statistics as the General Assembly may request from time to time. Any such report shall contain no identifying information about any particular child.]

Section 10. Subsection (d) of Section 17a-22ii of the general statutes is repealed (Effective Upon Passage).

[(d) On or before January 1, 2024, and annually thereafter, the Commissioner of Children and Families shall report, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a, to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to public health regarding the effectiveness of the grant program established under subsection (b) of this section.]

Section 11. Section 17a-22m of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (Effective from passage):

The Commissioners of Children and Families, Social Services and Mental Health and Addiction Services shall conduct an annual evaluation of the Behavioral Health Partnership and shall report, in accordance with section 11-4a, to the joint standing committees of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to appropriations and the budgets of state agencies, public health, human services and children on the provision of behavioral health services under the Behavioral Health Partnership, including information on the status of any administrative services organization implementation, the status of the collaboration among the Departments of Children and Families, Social Services and Mental Health and Addiction Services, the services provided, the number of persons served, program outcomes, [and] spending by child and adult populations and estimated cost savings, if any, resulting from implementation of the Behavioral Health Partnership.

Section 12. Section 17a-22n of the general statutes is repealed. (Effective from passage):

[Monitoring implementation of the Behavioral Health Partnership. Annual report to General Assembly. The Departments of Children and Families and Mental Health and Addiction Services shall monitor the implementation of the Behavioral Health Partnership and shall report annually to the joint standing committees of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to human services, public health and appropriations and the budgets of state agencies as to estimated cost savings, if any, resulting from implementation of the Behavioral Health Partnership.]

Section 13. Section 4-68y of the general statutes is repealed (Effective from passage):

[Disproportionate minority contact: Definitions, reports. Not later than September 30, 2011, and biennially thereafter, the Commissioner of Children and Families, the Commissioner of Emergency Services and Public Protection, the Chief State's Attorney, the Chief Public Defender, the Chief Court Administrator and the Police Officer Standards and Training Council shall submit a report, on behalf of the respective department, division, office or council, to the Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management on the plans established by the department, division, office or council to address disproportionate minority contact in the juvenile justice system and the steps taken to implement those plans during the previous two fiscal years. Any reports submitted by the Commissioner of Children and Families and the Chief Court Administrator, or on behalf of any other such department, division, office or council that has responsibility for providing child welfare services, including services in abuse and neglect cases, shall (1) indicate efforts undertaken in the previous two fiscal years to address disproportionate minority contact in the child welfare system, and (2) include an evaluation of the relationship between the child welfare system and disproportionate minority contact in the juvenile justice system. The Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management shall compile the submissions and shall submit a report on such submissions, in accordance with section 11-4a, to the Governor and the General Assembly not later than December thirty-first biennially. For the purposes of this section, "disproportionate minority contact" means that a disproportionate number of juvenile members of minority groups come into contact with the juvenile justice system.]



Agency Legislative Proposal

2026 Session

General Information

Agency	Dept. of Children and Families
Proposal Name	Department Notification Requirement Clarification
Legislative Liaison	Mike Carone
Division Requesting Proposal	Government Relations and Policy
Drafter	Mike Carone

Overview

Brief Summary of Proposal

This proposal would amend Section 17a-8b to provide clarity for when the Department must notify state and federal law enforcement of missing children.

What problem is this proposal looking to solve?

Section 17a-8b of the General Statutes does not provide exactly when DCF must report missing children to law enforcement. This statute also requires DCF to notify the FBI's National Crime Information Center (NCIC). DCF cannot report missing children to NCIC because the Department does not have access. Typically, only law enforcement has the authority to add a report in NCIC

How does the proposal solve the problem?

This proposal removes the unachievable requirement to notify the FBI's National Crime Information Center (NCIC) and provides clarity on which entities the Department must inform of missing children within a 24-hour period after the child is determined to be missing or abducted.

Section by section summary: *press tab after last field to add rows*

Section #(s)	Section Summary
1	Repeals the requirement for the Department to report missing children to the Federal Bureau of Investigation's National Crime Information Center, as DCF cannot report missing children to NCIC because the department does not have access to do so. Clarifies which entities the department shall make such reports of missing children to immediately, but in no case later than twenty-four hours after the child is determined to be missing or abducted.

Statutory Reference (if any): **17a-8b**

Background

☒ New Proposal

☐ Resubmission

If resubmission, please provide details below. Please also note any changes made since the last submission:

Bill #(s)	Reason bill(s) did not move forward
Click or tap here	Click or tap here

Have there been any changes in federal laws or regulations that make this legislation necessary?

No

Have there been any changes in state laws or regulations that make this legislation necessary?

No

Has this proposal or a similar proposal been implemented in other states?

No

Have certain constituencies called for this proposal?

Yes State Auditors.

Interagency Impact

☒ Check here if this proposal does NOT impact other agencies

Agency	N/A
Contact	N/A
Date Contacted	N/A
Status	N/A
Open Issues	N/A

Fiscal Impact

☒ No Fiscal Impact

☐ Budget Option Submitted

Include the section number(s) which have a fiscal impact and the anticipated impact:

State

No

Municipal

No

Federal

No

Other Information

If there is any additional information we should know, please detail below:

This proposal arose from a recommendation by the State Auditors in their most recent audit of the Department.

Legislative Language

Insert fully drafted bill below. Please use standard legislative drafting considerations, as published by LCO [here](#).

Section 1. Section 17a-8b of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (Effective Upon Passage):

The Department of Children and Families shall report any missing or abducted child who was committed to the custody of the commissioner to the law enforcement authority having jurisdiction over the geographical area from which the child was reported missing or was abducted and to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. The department shall make such reports immediately, but in no case later than twenty-four hours after the child is determined to be missing or abducted [, to the Federal Bureau of Investigation's National Crime Information Center and to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children].



Agency Legislative Proposal

2026 Session

General Information

Agency	Dept. of Children and Families
Proposal Name	Parent Reunification Specific Steps
Legislative Liaison	Mike Carone
Division Requesting Proposal	Office of Legal Affairs
Drafter	Mike Carone

Overview

Brief Summary of Proposal

This proposal would move the requirement of the court ordering specific steps that a parent must take to facilitate the return of a child to the parent's custody after the court has committed the child to DCF from Sec. 46b-129 (j)(4) to 46b-129 (j)(2).

What problem is this proposal looking to solve?

In 2012, section 46b-129 (j) was separated into several subsections. When that occurred, the requirement that the Juvenile Court orders specific steps for a parent to meet in order to be reunified with the child was placed in the incorrect subsection (46b-129 (j) (4)). The proper section for the language is 46b-129 (j) (2), which is when the court orders commitment of the child to DCF.

How does the proposal solve the problem?

This proposal would appropriately direct the court to indicate the specific steps a parent must take to be reunified with a child when the commitment to DCF occurs.

Section by section summary:

Section #(s)	Section Summary
1	Section 46b-129 (j)(2) is amended to move the requirement of the court ordering specific steps that a parent must take to facilitate the return of the child to their custody at the time the court commits the child to the Department from subsection 46b-129(j)4.
2	46b-129 (j)(4) is amended to remove the requirement of the court ordering specific steps that a parent must take to facilitate the return of the child to their custody since this section relates to the vesting of guardianship in someone other than the parent.

Statutory Reference (if any): Section 46b-129 (j)(2) and 46b-129 (j)(4)

Background

☒ New Proposal

☐ Resubmission

If resubmission, please provide details below. Please also note any changes made since the last submission:

Bill #(s)	Reason bill(s) did not move forward
------------------	--

Have there been any changes in federal laws or regulations that make this legislation necessary?

No

Have there been any changes in state laws or regulations that make this legislation necessary?

No

Has this proposal or a similar proposal been implemented in other states?

No

Have certain constituencies called for this proposal?

Yes Legal division, OAG and Judicial.

Interagency Impact

☒ Check here if this proposal does NOT impact other agencies

Agency	N/A
Contact	N/A
Date Contacted	N/A
Status	N/A
Open Issues	N/A

Fiscal Impact

☒ No Fiscal Impact

☐ Budget Option Submitted

Include the section number(s) which have a fiscal impact and the anticipated impact:

State

No

Municipal

No

Federal

No

Other Information

If there is any additional information we should know, please detail below:

The Judicial Branch has worked with DCF to draft this proposal.

Legislative Language

Insert fully drafted bill below. Please use standard legislative drafting considerations, as published by LCO [here](#).

Section 1. Subsection (2) of Subsection (j) in Section 46b-129 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (Effective from passage):

Upon finding and adjudging that any child or youth is uncared for, neglected or abused the court may (A) commit such child or youth to the Commissioner of Children and Families, and such commitment shall remain in effect until further order of the court, except that such commitment may be revoked or parental rights terminated at any time by the court; (B) vest such child's or youth's legal guardianship in any private or public agency that is permitted by law to care for neglected, uncared for or abused children or youths or with any other person or persons found to be suitable and worthy of such responsibility by the court, including, but not limited to, any relative of such child or youth by blood or marriage; (C) vest such child's or youth's permanent legal guardianship in any person or persons found to be suitable and worthy of such responsibility by the court, including, but not limited to, any relative of such child or youth by blood or marriage in accordance with the requirements set forth in subdivision (6) of this subsection; or (D) place the child or youth in the custody of the parent or guardian with protective supervision by the Commissioner of Children and Families subject to conditions established by the court. Upon issuing any order pursuant to this section, the court shall order specific steps that the parent must take to facilitate the return of the child or youth to the custody of such parent or to maintain the child or youth in such parent's custody while under an order of protective supervision.

Section 2. Subsection (4) of Subsection (j) in Section 46b-129 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (Effective from passage):

If the court determines that the commitment should be revoked and the child's or youth's legal guardianship or permanent legal guardianship should vest in someone other than the respondent parent, parents or former guardian, or if parental rights are terminated at any time, there shall be a rebuttable presumption that an award of legal guardianship or permanent legal guardianship upon revocation to, or adoption upon termination of parental rights by, any caregiver or person or who is, pursuant to an order of the court, the temporary custodian of the child or youth at the time of the revocation or termination, shall

be in the best interests of the child or youth and that such caregiver is a suitable and worthy person to assume legal guardianship or permanent legal guardianship upon revocation or to adopt such child or youth upon termination of parental rights. The presumption may be rebutted by a preponderance of the evidence that an award of legal guardianship or permanent legal guardianship to, or an adoption by, such caregiver would not be in the child's or youth's best interests and such caregiver is not a suitable and worthy person. [The court shall order specific steps that the parent must take to facilitate the return of the child or youth to the custody of such parent.]