

§124. Children and family services advisory board.

(a) There is hereby created a children and family services advisory board. The board shall consist of the commissioner of children and family services, and twenty-four members who have demonstrated an active interest in children and families. Twelve members shall be appointed by the governor and twelve additional members shall be appointed by the legislature, as follows: four members by the temporary president of the senate; four members by the speaker of the assembly; two members by the minority leader of the senate and two members by the minority leader of the assembly. Members shall be appointed only if they have professional knowledge of the policies and programs affecting children and families or have an active interest in the system of services to children and families. The governor shall designate one of the appointed members of the board as chairperson. At least one-half of the members of the council shall not be providers of services. Members shall be appointed for terms of three years provided, however that of the members first appointed, one-third shall be appointed for two-year terms. Vacancies shall be filled in the same manner as original appointments for the remainder of any unexpired term. No person shall be an appointed member of the board for more than six years in any period of twelve consecutive years.

(b) The board may consider any matter relating to the improvement of children and family service in the state and shall advise the commissioner of the office of children and family services on any such matter including, but not limited to services to families; care of children, adolescents and adults; improvement of services for underserved populations; relationships between units of state and local governments in financing and regulating services; family preservation; prevention of child abuse; juvenile delinquency prevention; foster care; adoption; youth development; day care; services to the blind and visually handicapped; domestic violence programs and services and adult services, among others.

(c) The board shall meet at least four times in each full calendar year.

(d) The members of the board shall receive no compensation for their services but shall be reimbursed for expenses actually and necessarily incurred in the performance of their duties.

(e) At least sixty days prior to the commissioner of the office of children and family services final approval of rules and regulations, other than emergency rules and regulations, the commissioner shall submit the proposed rules and regulations to the board for review. The board shall report its recommendations thereon to the commissioner of the office of children and family services within sixty days.

(f) No civil action shall be brought in any court against any member of the children and family services board for any act done, failure to act, or statement or opinion made, while discharging his or her duties as a member of the board, without leave from a justice of the supreme court, first had and obtained. In any event such member shall not be liable for damages in any such action if he or she shall have acted in good faith, with reasonable care and upon probable cause. Members of the board shall be considered public officers for the purposes of section 17 of the public officers law.