

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

Senate Research Center  
83R2611 YDB-F

S.B. 245  
By: West  
Health & Human Services  
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As Filed

### **AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT**

Children's Advocacy Centers of Texas (CACTX) is the state membership organization for the 66 children's advocacy centers (center) across the state. Over the past two years, CACTX has worked with stakeholders to update and elevate the statewide standards that govern the type of services provided by each local center.

This bill is a product of that work and reflects a best practices standard for all centers. Each standard is evidence-based and directly tied to state funding. While centers are already implementing these practices, the new standards are not currently codified.

Specifically, the bill adds the following to the list of requirements to be implemented by a center for a center to provide services for children and family members in child abuse and neglect cases: a case tracking system; provision of a child-focused setting; comprehensive case management and victim support services; coordinated forensic interviews; specialized medical evaluations; trauma-focused mental health services; and culturally competent services.

As with existing requirements, CACTX may waive any of these requirements if it determines that the waiver will not adversely affect a center's ability to carry out its duties.

As proposed, S.B. 245 amends current law relating to eligibility of children's advocacy centers for contracts to provide services for children and family members in child abuse and neglect cases.

### **RULEMAKING AUTHORITY**

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

### **SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS**

SECTION 1. Amends Section 264.411, Family Code, as follows:

Sec. 264.411. ELIGIBILITY FOR CONTRACTS. (a) Provides that a public entity that operated as a children's advocacy center (center) under this subchapter before November 1, 1995, or a nonprofit entity is eligible for a contract under Section 264.410 (Contracts With Children's Advocacy Centers) if the entity:

(1)-(9) Makes no changes to these subdivisions;

(10) implements at the center the following program components:

(A) a case tracking system that monitors statistical information on each child and nonoffending family member or other caregiver who receives services through the center and that includes progress and disposition information for each service the multidisciplinary team determines should be provided to the client;

(B) a child-focused setting that is comfortable, private, and physically and psychologically safe for diverse populations of children and nonoffending family members and other caregivers;

(C) family advocacy and victim support services that include comprehensive case management and victim support services available to each child and the child's nonoffending family members or other caregivers as part of the services the multidisciplinary team determines should be provided to a client;

(D) forensic interviews conducted in a neutral, fact-finding manner and coordinated to avoid duplicative interviewing;

(E) specialized medical evaluation and treatment services that are available to all children who receive services through the center and coordinated with the services the multidisciplinary team determines should be provided to a child;

(F) specialized trauma-focused mental health services that are designed to meet the unique needs of child abuse victims and the victims' nonoffending family members or other caregivers and that are available as part of the services the multidisciplinary team determines should be provided to a client; and

(G) a system to ensure that all services available to center clients are culturally competent and diverse and are coordinated with the services the multidisciplinary team determines should be provided to a client.

(b) Deletes existing text requiring that any waiver that is granted by the statewide organization of the requirements specified in Subsection (a) be identified in the written contract with the center.

SECTION 2. Makes application of this Act prospective.

SECTION 3. Effective date: September 1, 2013.