



## 104TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

### State of Illinois

2025 and 2026

HB3732

Introduced 2/18/2025, by Rep. Maura Hirschauer

#### SYNOPSIS AS INTRODUCED:

20 ILCS 505/5.48 new

Amends the Children and Family Services Act. Requires the Department of Children and Family Services to establish and administer a 5-year Biological Foster Care Case Management Pilot Program that provides a framework to prioritize reunifying children with biological parents after an appropriate stabilization period. Provides that under the pilot program, the Department shall develop individualized, time-bound reunification plans that outline steps for returning children to their parents or guardians; and promote case coordination by providing caseworkers with specialized resources to focus exclusively on building relationships with biological families for the child. Provides that program tools and services shall include mental health evaluations, family counseling, and reintegration services. Provides that for each child placed in foster care, the Department shall develop a 2-year plan involving the child, biological parents, and key stakeholders to ensure sustained family stability. Contains provisions on employment and income opportunities for parents and foster youth under the pilot program; and Department reporting requirements.

LRB104 09568 KTG 19631 b

1 AN ACT concerning State government.

2 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,**  
3 **represented in the General Assembly:**

4 Section 5. The Children and Family Services Act is amended  
5 by adding Section 5.48 as follows:

6 (20 ILCS 505/5.48 new)

7 Sec. 5.48. Biological Foster Care Case Management Pilot  
8 Program.

9 (a) Purpose. Illinois currently faces challenges with  
10 prolonged foster care placements and reunification delays.  
11 Only 18.6 % of the children who entered substitute care in the  
12 Cook County region in Calendar Year 2021 were reunified with  
13 their families within 24 months. The purpose of this Section  
14 is to create a pilot program focused on providing parents with  
15 their own case manager, separate from their children in State  
16 care, to aid in reunifying children with their biological  
17 families after entering foster care. The pilot program would  
18 focus on, improving case management services and connection to  
19 community resources, and integrating workforce development  
20 initiatives for foster youth and parents facing economic  
21 hardship.

22 (b) Legislative findings. The General Assembly finds the  
23 following:

1           (1) Many children in foster care experience  
2           instability due to insufficient family support systems and  
3           inadequate caseworker resources.

4           (2) Family reunification, when safely possible, leads  
5           to better long-term outcomes for children.

6           (3) Comprehensive support for parents, including job  
7           readiness and placement programs, is essential to creating  
8           a stable home environment for returning children.

9           (c) Program establishment and components. The Department  
10          of Children and Family Services shall establish and administer  
11          a 5-year Biological Foster Care Case Management Pilot Program  
12          that provides a framework to prioritize reunifying children  
13          with biological parents after an appropriate stabilization  
14          period. Under the pilot program, the Department shall develop  
15          individualized, time-bound reunification plans that outline  
16          steps for returning children to their parents or guardians. To  
17          promote case coordination, the Department shall provide  
18          caseworkers with specialized resources to focus exclusively on  
19          building relationships with biological families for the child.  
20          Tools and services shall include mental health evaluations,  
21          family counseling, and reintegration services.

22          (d) Two-year reunification plan. For each child placed in  
23          foster care, the Department shall develop a 2-year plan  
24          involving the child, biological parents, and key stakeholders  
25          to ensure sustained family stability. The Department shall  
26          also:

1           (1) conduct quarterly service plan reviews to measure  
2           progress toward milestones;

3           (2) promote family relationship building, by  
4           implementing structured family engagement sessions during  
5           the first 6 months of an open case to strengthen bonds  
6           between children and biological parents; and

7           (3) target reunifying at least 40% of children who are  
8           new to care within the first 18-24 months of placement.

9           (e) Workforce development component. To increase  
10          employment and income opportunities for parents and foster  
11          youth aged 16 and older, the pilot program shall:

12           (1) provide parents and foster youth with access to  
13           job readiness training, paid internships, and mentorship  
14           programs to build career skills and financial  
15           independence; and

16           (2) provide job training, financial literacy, and job  
17           placement services to parents in poverty to support  
18           economic stability and successful reunification.

19          (f) Outcomes and reporting. Beginning one year after  
20          implementation of the pilot program, the Department shall  
21          submit annual reports to the General Assembly that detail  
22          reunification rates, family engagement metrics, funding  
23          adjustments, and workforce development outcomes. The final  
24          report shall be submitted 3 months after the pilot program  
25          terminates. After the pilot programs second full year of  
26          operation, the Department shall conduct a program evaluation

1 to determine scalability and long-term viability.