

# SENATE HEALTH, HUMAN SERVICES AND SENIOR CITIZENS COMMITTEE

## STATEMENT TO **SENATE, No. 4121**

with committee amendments

# STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: JANUARY 4, 2024

The Senate Health, Human Services and Senior Citizens Committee reports favorably and with committee amendments Senate Bill No. 4121.

As amended by committee, this bill requires the Department of Children and Families (DCF), in collaboration with the Department of Health (DOH), the Department of Human Services (DHS), and the Department of Education (DOE) to publish information on early childhood mental health to certain professionals.

As amended, the DCF, DOH, DHS, and DOE are to disseminate the information to social workers, teachers, and child care workers, within their respective licensed or contracted programs, whose work consists primarily of providing services to children who are five years of age or younger.

The bill provides that the information is to include, but not be limited to: (1) discussing the importance for early childhood mental health awareness; (2) appropriately relaying mental health concerns to a parent or guardian; and (3) referring a parent or guardian to State or community resources to assess a child's mental health needs.

The bill, as amended, requires the DCF, the DOH, the DHS, and the DOE to coordinate on the dissemination of the information published pursuant to the bill's provisions.

As amended and reported by the committee, Senate Bill No. 4121 is identical to Assembly Bill No. 5240 (1R), which was also amended and reported by the committee on this date.

### COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS:

The committee amended the bill to include the DOH as one of the State departments that the DCF is to collaborate with in publishing information on early childhood mental health pursuant to the provisions of the bill.

The committee amendments require the DCF, DOH, DHS, and DOE to disseminate the information required under the bill, instead of publishing and disseminating the information, as originally provided in

the bill, to social workers, teachers, and child care workers, within their respective licensed or contracted programs.

The committee amended the bill to remove the requirement that the DCF provide in-service training of social workers, teachers, and child care workers on the information published and disseminated pursuant to the bill.

The committee amendments require the DCF, DOH, DHS, and DOE to coordinate on the dissemination of the information required under the bill.

The committee amended the bill stipulate that the DOH, DHS, and DOE consult with the DCF to adopt the rules and regulations implementing the provisions of the bill.

The committee amendments make technical changes concerning grammar and punctuation.