ASSEMBLY AGING AND HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

ASSEMBLY, No. 2054

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: JUNE 1, 2026

The Assembly Aging and Human Services Committee reports favorably Assembly Bill No. 2054.

This bill requires the Division of Children's System of Care (DCSOC) in the Department of Children and Families to: (1) establish an authorization period of 12 months for the provision of agency-hired, agency-weekend respite, and self-hired respite care, to an individual under the age of 21 with a developmental disability; (2) once an individual under the age of 21 with a developmental disability has been authorized to receive family support services from an agency contracted with the Department of Children and Families (DCF), ensure that the individual's family or guardian be provided with a bank of respite care service hours, in addition to, and separate from, any other family support service hours the individual, the individual's family or guardian, or both are eligible to receive, that can be used during each authorization period, including, but not limited to, agency-hired, agency-weekend respite, or self-hired respite care, based on the specific needs of the individual, the individual's family or guardian, or both; and (3) establish a process by which the family or guardian of an individual under the age of 21 with a developmental disability who has been authorized to receive family support services undergoes an annual reevaluation of the need for the family support services received during the authorization period.

Nothing in the bill is to be construed to allow the DCSOC to reduce the amount of respite care service hours an individual under the age of 21 with a developmental disability, the individual's family or guardian, or both have been authorized to receive during a 12 month authorization period.

As defined in the bill: "agency-hired respite care" means respite care, including social and recreational experiences, provided by a trained respite care worker employed by an agency contracted with the DCF to an individual under the age of 21 with a developmental disability in, or outside of, the individual's home; "agency-weekend respite care" means social and recreational experiences provided during the weekend by a trained respite care worker employed by an agency contracted with the DCF to an individual under the age of 21 with a developmental disability outside of the individual's home; and "self-hired respite care" means an arrangement that allows the family or guardian of an individual under the age of 21 with a developmental

disability to recruit and hire a trained respite care worker, paid directly by individual's family or guardian, to provide social and recreational experiences to the individual in, or outside of, the individual's home.

Currently, DCSOC policy reauthorizes the provision of agency-hired, agency-weekend, and self-hired respite care every 90 days, stipulates that certain respite care services are limited to a set number of service hours (60 hours for agency-hired and self-hired respite care and 75 hours for agency-weekend respite care), and requires the families of individuals under the age of 21 with a developmental disability receiving family support services to undergo an annual reapplication process to continue to receive such services.

This bill would require the DCSOC to expand the authorization period for the provision of agency-hired, agency-weekend, and self-hired respite care from the current 90 days to 12 months, ensure that certain respite care services are not limited to a set number of service hours during each authorization period, and replaces the annual reapplication process with an annual reevaluation process of the family supports services provided by DCSOC to eligible individuals to afford families the flexibility to access respite care based on their specific needs.