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## Children and Domestic Matters

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The General Assembly passed legislation during the 2019 legislative session which strengthens protections for children in voluntary temporary care; requires studying challenges facing child care homes and ways to increase the availability of infant and child care in child care homes; amends child support guidelines; and modernizes marriage laws for minors.

### Child Care

Parents who are members of the armed services and who are being deployed or called to active duty, or parents who are in crisis often need outside temporary support to safely care for their children. *House Bill 19-1142* allows a child placement agency to operate a temporary care assistance program to help parents identify an appropriate and safe temporary caregiver who the parent can delegate temporary care and responsibility to for no more than six months. The bill sets procedures for vetting and identifying temporary caregivers. Placement in a temporary care program does not change parental or legal rights; constitute child abuse or neglect; or result in a child being neglected.

*Senate Bill 19-063* requires the Colorado Department of Human Services (DHS) and the Early Childhood Leadership Commission to develop an Infant and Family Child Care Action Plan to address the decline of family child care homes and availability of child care throughout the state. The plan must outline

state-specific research concerning the lack of licensed and exempt family child care homes and available infant child care; the obstacles family child care homes face, including why they may not provide infant care; information on state and local conditions for operating family child care homes; how state programs and public investment promote available and affordable care; a list of available resources to assist providers; and recommendations that do not require additional resources.

*Senate Bill 19-177* allows DHS to conduct a background check in its child welfare tracking system (TRAILS) when requested in writing by an individual whose responsibilities include supervision of children or unsupervised contact with children. The bill also eliminates exemptions from fingerprint background checks for certain child care employees and requires that a check be conducted for any employee of a child care or child placement center who is under the age of 18; any out-of-state employee of a temporary school-age child care center; and all owners, employees, volunteers, and adults residing in a family child care home.

### Child Support

Based on recommendations from the Colorado Child Support Commission, *House Bill 19-1215* makes changes to income determinations and payment guidelines for calculating child support payments, including creating a new

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\$10 minimum child support order amount when an obligor's monthly income is under \$650. The bill also allows DHS to issue a notice of administrative lien and levy to any financial institution holding an obligor's account when an obligor is past due on child support obligations. The bill reinstates the requirement that the Colorado Child Support Commission meet at least every four years to review the child support guidelines.

the right to establish a domicile separate from his or her parents;

- the right to file motions and petitions with a court on in his or her own behalf and in his or her own name;
- the right to enter into enforceable contracts, including but not limited to leases for housing; and
- the right to consent to and make decisions concerning the his or her own medical care.

### Marriage

*House Bill 19-1316* modernizes marriage laws for minors. The bill requires parties to be at least the age of 16 when getting married and, if under the age of 18, to get judicial approval before being married. The bill also establishes rights for a married person under the age of 18, including: