

ASSEMBLY APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

ASSEMBLY, No. 2772

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: OCTOBER 22, 2026

The Assembly Appropriations Committee reports favorably Assembly Bill No. 2772.

As reported, this bill requires the Division of Child Protection and Permanency (division) to develop a training course and curriculum on suicide screening and crisis response planning. The training course and curriculum developed is to concern:

(1) recognizing warning signs, risk factors, and protective factors for suicide in children and adolescents through hands-on use of validated suicide prevention tools such as the Columbia Suicide Severity Rating Scale;

(2) establishing protocols for responding when a child is identified as at risk, including immediate de-escalation techniques; and

(3) coordinating care with mental health professionals, schools, resource parents, and community supports.

The division is to ensure that:

(1) the training course is part of each caseworker's initial training and, biennially, as part of the in-service training provided to each caseworker, as appropriate; and

(2) every caseworker hired by the division prior to the effective date of this bill, within 24 months of the effective date of this bill, is to satisfactorily complete the training course developed and adopted.

The division is to periodically review the training course and curriculum established pursuant to this bill and update the course and curriculum as necessary.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Absent information from the Department of Children and Families, the Office of Legislative Services (OLS) lacks the informational basis to determine to what extent all new and current Division of Child Protection and Permanency caseworkers undergo specific training on suicide screening and crisis response planning.

As of FY 2023, new Division of Child Protection and Permanency caseworkers were required to take at least three courses addressing mental health disorders and the child welfare system. Current caseworkers also can select from multiple courses addressing suicide prevention and youth mental health offered by the New Jersey Child

Welfare Training Partnership. To the extent that these new caseworker and continuing education courses satisfy the bill's suicide prevention and crisis response training requirements, the department's costs will be minimized.

Insofar as the department incurs additional costs to provide the requisite caseworker training, State revenues will increase in the form of federal reimbursements under the Social Security Act.