SENATE, No. 4112

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

222nd LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED MAY 4, 2026

Sponsored by:
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District 18 (Middlesex)
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SYNOPSIS

Establishes brain injury screening and education program in DCF.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.

(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 6/1/2026)

AN ACT concerning brain injury in children and young adults and supplementing Title 30 of the Revised Statutes.

BE IT ENACTED *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:*

1. a. There is established a brain injury screening and education program in the Department of Children and Families. It shall be the objective of the program to:

(1) identify children and young adults with brain injury, ages five to 21, who are involved, or who may be at risk of involvement, with the State's mental health or juvenile justice systems; and

(2) provide education to, and raise awareness and promote outreach among, parents and guardians, educators, judges, law enforcement officials, health care providers, and employees of State psychiatric facilities, State juvenile facilities, county psychiatric hospitals, county juvenile detention facilities, county probation departments, children's crisis intervention services units, screening services, and the divisions and offices of the Department of Children and Families including, but not limited to, the Divisions of Child Protection and Permanency, Children's System of Care, and Family and Community Partnerships, and the Office of Adolescent Services about brain injury in children and young adults and the availability of treatment services and rehabilitative programs geared to the specific needs of such children and young adults.

b. For purposes of the program, the Commissioner of Children and Families, in consultation with the New Jersey Advisory Council on Traumatic Brain Injury, shall implement:

(1) (a) a reliable and validated screening tool and structured interviews, conducted by persons with foundational knowledge of brain injury, to assess prior history of brain injury; and

(b) training and consultancy for educators, judges, law enforcement officials, health care providers, and employees of State psychiatric facilities State juvenile facilities, county psychiatric hospitals, county juvenile detention facilities, county probation departments, children's crisis intervention services units, screening services, and the divisions and offices of the Department of Children and Families to gain foundational knowledge of brain injury in order to identify, evaluate, and provide appropriate treatment services and rehabilitative programs, as applicable, to children and young adults with brain injury in order to prevent admissions to psychiatric hospitals and reduce the recidivism rates of juveniles adjudicated delinquent;

(2) measures to increase awareness of, and educate parents and guardians, educators, judges, law enforcement officials, health care and mental health care providers, and employees of State psychiatric facilities, State juvenile facilities, county psychiatric hospitals, county juvenile detention facilities, county probation

departments, children's crisis intervention services units, screening services, and the divisions and offices of the Department of Children and Families on, brain injury in children and young adults, which shall include, at a minimum, information on the links between brain injury, juvenile delinquency, and the early onset of psychiatric diagnoses, the value of early detection, and the treatment services and rehabilitative programs available to children and young adults with brain injury;

(3) outreach strategies to disseminate information about brain injury and the treatment services and rehabilitative programs available to children and young adults with brain injury through a variety of entities, including, but not limited to, health care facilities, State psychiatric facilities, State juvenile facilities, county psychiatric hospitals, county juvenile detention facilities, county probation departments, local health departments, the Brain Injury Alliance of New Jersey, and clinics, schools, libraries, programs that provide mental health services to children, other community-based organizations providing services to children, and the Internet; and

(4) guidelines for the completion of a more detailed assessment of children and young adults with brain injury, and for the information and resources made available to parents and guardians, following a positive screening of children and young adults for a prior history of brain injury.

c. The Commissioner of Children and Families shall apply for and accept any grant of money from the federal government, private foundations, or other sources, which may be available for programs for children and young adults with brain injury as determined by the commissioner to be appropriate for the State's system of programs and services for children and young adults with brain injury.

2. The Commissioner of Children and Families, in consultation with the New Jersey Traumatic Brain Injury Advisory Council, shall annually report to the Governor and, pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1991, c. 164 (C.52:14-19.1), to the Legislature, on the activities of the program and the program's effectiveness in meeting its objectives. The first report shall be provided no later than 12 months after the effective date of this act.

3. Subject to the "Administrative Procedure Act," P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et seq.), the Commissioner of Children and Families shall adopt rules and regulations to effectuate the purposes of this act.

4. This act shall take effect immediately.

STATEMENT

This bill establishes a brain injury screening and education program in the Department of Children and Families (DCF).

The objective of the program would be to: identify children and young adults with brain injury, ages five to 21, who are involved, or who may be at risk of involvement, with the State's mental health or juvenile justice systems; and provide education to, and raise awareness and promote outreach among, parents and guardians, educators, judges, law enforcement officials, health care providers, and employees of State psychiatric facilities, State juvenile facilities, county psychiatric hospitals, county juvenile detention facilities, county probation departments, children's crisis intervention services units, screening services, and the divisions and offices of DCF, including, but not limited to, the Divisions of Child Protection and Permanency, Children's System of Care, Family and Community Partnerships, and the Office of Adolescent Services. The education, awareness, and outreach efforts would include providing information about brain injury in children and young adults and the availability of treatment services and rehabilitative programs geared to the their specific needs.

For purposes of the program, the Commissioner of DCF, in consultation with the New Jersey Traumatic Brain Injury Advisory Council (the council), would implement: (1) a reliable and validated screening tool and structured interviews, conducted by persons with foundational knowledge of brain injury, to assess prior history of brain injury: (2) training and consultancy to gain foundational knowledge of the brain in order to identify, evaluate, and provide appropriate treatment services and rehabilitative programs to children and young adults with traumatic brain injury in order to prevent admissions to psychiatric hospitals and reduce the recidivism rates of juveniles adjudicated delinquent; (3) measures to increase awareness of, and provide education on, traumatic brain injury in children and young adults, including, information on the links between brain injury, juvenile delinquency, and the early onset of psychiatric diagnoses, the value of early detection, and the treatment services and rehabilitative programs available to children and young adults with brain injury; (4) outreach strategies to disseminate information about brain injury and the treatment services and rehabilitative programs available to children and young adults with such injury through a variety of entities; and (5) guidelines for the completion of a more detailed assessment of children and young adults, and the information and resources made available to parents and guardians, following a positive screening of children and young adults for a prior history of brain injury.

The provisions of the bill also direct the commissioner to apply for and accept any grant of money from the federal government,

private foundations, or other sources, which may be available for programs for children and young adults with brain injury, as determined by the commissioner to be appropriate for the State's system of programs and services for children and young adults with brain injury.

Finally, the commissioner, in consultation with the council, would report to the Governor and the Legislature, no later than 12 months after the effective date of the bill, and annually thereafter, on the activities of the screening program and the program's effectiveness in meeting its objectives.